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The SMART SET



ARCHIE GUNN

*A Magazine of
Cleverness*

The SMART SET

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HALF A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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The SMART SET

Edited by
GEORGE JEAN NATHAN
and
H. L. MENCKEN



REBELS

By M. A. Brooks

I

THE gods of the valley slipped down from their altar after the bronze doors had clanged shut behind the last of the worshippers and filed slowly out into the ante-room of the temple.

The youngest god, dawdling purposely, waited until the sound of their sandals slapping and shuffling on the smooth, worn stones as they washed the incense from their hands and hung up their haloes, and robes in their lockers, had died away down the corridors. Angry tears in his eyes made a blinding blur of the sun-filled doorway leading from the ante-room into the flower-hung corridor and thence into the garden where the others were gathering to finish the game of quoits which

the afternoon service had interrupted.

With hands held clenched at his sides, he walked fiercely out among them.

"I'm through with you!" he choked. "I saw you in there laughing and sneering at those poor people. I've seen you do it before. You aren't even human and I hate you. I'm going away."

He glared at them, rubbed the tears from his eyes and, as they stared, vaulted the white stone garden wall.

II

THE sound of heavy snoring was the first thing that struck upon the ears of Carol Carter as she opened the door of her apartment.

Her eyes darted worriedly about the room until they discovered the uncon-

scious figure of her husband sprawled in a drunken crimson-faced stupor upon a couch. She walked toward him. A nausea almost overcame her, but she bent over him, clutched his shoulder firmly and shook him awake.

"I'm through with you!" she choked, shivering with aversion. "I can't stand

it to see you like this again. I'm going to go away and leave you right now. Do you understand?"

He gave a troubled grunt and sank back to sleep. She put her hand over her quivering lips and turned away.

"How I hate him," she thought. "And once I thought he was a god!"



THE RIDERS

Mary Carolyn Davies

LIFE is on a swift horse, and Youth is on a fleet,
Beauty rides with spur and whip, and nothing stays,
Snatch my hand, and pull me close, and make them beat,
Your heart and my heart, a few small days!

Let the quarrels go now, the explaining word;
Let the treasured griefs drop down like sand.
What are our best toys, when their hoofs are heard?
Put the words behind us, and touch my hand.

Mighty are the steeds and swift, wild the steeds that bear
The Three on the highroad where the great stones fly.
If your face hide at my neck, my eyes hide in your hair,
We shall never know, then, Who has ridden by!



WOMEN are interested in a roué for the same reason that they are attracted to a child. Each is a creature of their own creation.



A SWEETHEART is a bottle of wine; a wife is a wine-bottle.



HOW VIRTUE CAME TO ROSE MARIE

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By E. B. Dewing

CHAPTER I

VIRTUE never comes. It goes, like the dying, into that bourne from which no traveller returns. It can no more be pressed back to its old form than can the butterfly be re-enfolded in the broken cocoon.

But Rose Marie didn't know this. It would have been for her the merest theory, and she was never concerned with theory—never, in all her life. There were certain practical problems which she had to meet, even at the first. Particularly at the first. Keeping warm and fed, for instance, and out of the reach of the hard fist of her drunken father.

When her father wasn't drunk he did teaming for a local express company. When her mother wasn't bringing into an overcrowded world another child she took in washing.

Rose Marie was among the eldest, and her mother had chosen her name from a verse on a grocery store calendar. It was a beautiful name, everyone thought, and among the earliest things Rose Marie learned was to read it and to write it. But the hours of her schooling were all too brief. For she couldn't go to school when she didn't have shoes to wear there, and in her family there were not enough shoes. Shoes were lent and fought over.

In the summer this didn't matter much, because the second generation of Davises could play, barefooted, in the patch of grass and dirt which served as

a front yard. To this day, beneath the web-like silk of her stocking, the firm, shining satin of her slipper, Rose Marie carries a scar from having stepped upon a broken bottle. But in the winter, all sprawled and tossing in the unprepossessing main room that was kitchen, living-room and laundry, all wet from the slopping water of the tubs and dry from the great glowing stove, it wasn't so agreeable to be unable to get away from hearth and home.

And then, in the unexplored depths of Rose Marie's not clever but somehow acquisitive brain was formulated a plan. This ability was one of the ways in which she was different from her brothers and sisters. They, too, might have been impatient with their lot if they'd known they had one, but their impatience would have been—would have resulted in—at best, but a vague, quarrelsome discontent; hers could be translated into terms of action.

And yet her plan wasn't action, really. It was a matter of waiting for a circumstance which never had occurred, and she had no sufficient reason for supposing ever would occur. She waited during two years of Saturday nights for her father's wages to be brought home intact. And at the end of the two years her waiting was rewarded, and she rose in the middle of the night and stole them from his pocket.

She ran away, and after that, of course, she was afraid to come back. When their first shock of surprised anger was over—the morning made hid-

eous by curses and imprecations—her family decided her loss was cheap enough. She hadn't worked, save intermittently, had never been much help with the washing or given any very tender care to the younger children.

She had enough money to take her to the nearest city, a western town of some hundred thousand inhabitants.

She found a lodging for the night, making a blind but lucky choice, and the next day obtained work in a button factory, by answering an advertisement in the want column of a paper.

She had been there for what seemed an eon of time, one of a frowsy crew among whom she was easily capable of holding her own, when she attracted the attention of the superintendent. She was different from her fellow workers, just as she had been different from her brothers and sisters.

She had about her—something in her brow, her eyes—a suggestion of power. She never stooped over her work, her hair was as alive and as splendid at the end of the day as it was at the beginning, her fingers were very nimble with the skill and the nimbleness of any perfectly put together machine.

The superintendent spoke to her once or twice and then, by seeming accident, separated her from the others long enough to make an appointment to meet her outside of factory hours.

Rose Marie took her first complete bath. She mended her old clothes and with what little money she had saved bought a few new ones. That night, in the dark hall of the cheap lodging-house where she still had a share in a room, when the superintendent held her—briefly—in his arms, he might have been embracing any other woman, a woman not nearly so new to the amenities of the world.

The superintendent was rather a commonplace man of something past thirty-five, with a family of whom he had secretly tired and an income a little more than sufficient for their needs. This slight surplus he was glad to spend on Rose Marie, and in addition he gave her work in the office of the factory instead

of in the actual manufacture of the commodity.

She accepted the situation in full. It was one for which she had bided her time and rejected other possibilities less advantageous. Now her material wants were agreeably met, the bath became a habit, her fingers no less nimble but more ornamental.

No one knew—definitely—of her affair with the superintendent, he took good care they shouldn't, and she was not of a loose-tongued disposition. She liked the work in the office, she learned to file papers and use a typewriter and many things less precise. But no office could have held her. Much to the astonishment of the superintendent, she left both him and his button factory quite unceremoniously.

She decided to go upon the stage. She arrived at this decision without knowing anything about the stage, or how hard it was to get a start there and how hard to rise. She had no thought for the tribulations of a theatrical career.

Quite simply she made her decision, and as an extraordinary binding of this bargain with herself she joined a burlesque show in the lower part of town. She was engaged wholly upon her looks. She could neither dance nor sing, her speaking voice was impossible, she had no natural sense of how to read her lines.

There were many things about the stage she didn't like. She didn't like appearing before the footlights in the lack of clothing prescribed. It took her a long while to outgrow this distaste, and even then it would come over her afresh when she was tired or depressed.

But that wasn't all. Instead of being concealed, as in the button factory, a lack of morals was taken for granted in the burlesque show. If you had any character you were a suspicious one.

The stage director was a down-at-heels Englishman who had seen better days in London. He drank to an extent, and was thought—though not proved—to be a drug addict. But he had an eye for color, for decoration, in

fact knew much a director of just that sort of show isn't supposed to know. He even knew something of singing and dancing, and he became interested in Rose Marie and taught her the rudiments of these neglected arts.

His interest wasn't exactly the same interest felt by the superintendent. To him she had been a handsome, quiet girl who appealed to him in a way and gave him little trouble. She gave the stage director a great deal of trouble—he took a great deal about her—he found her anything but quiet and rather more than handsome, and in that particular way she didn't very greatly appeal to him.

But she had a sort of fancy for him and he never thwarted fancies. In this case it afforded him the opportunity to watch over her almost tenderly and save her from a great deal that might have been destructive. He extended her a helping, not a hindering, hand. He was seedy to the point of shoddiness, his indubitable talents had been swallowed by his weaknesses, and yet, in comparison with the man she had known before and the men she knew after—immediately after—he had qualities.

When, thanks to him, she became one of the lesser principals in the current offering it was one of the very rare occasions in her whole life when there stirred within her the emotion of gratitude. She was often far less grateful for far more.

He designed her a black dress trimmed with silver crescent moons, a crescent moon in her hair. It was little enough to design for her, but considering its excessive limitations it had distinction, and for the rest it was for her to provide the distinction. She had a sentimental song to sing, or rather to recite—she never had a singing voice—the stage was dark, the spotlight trained on her, and then the other girls came in and joined in the chorus.

It wasn't any great triumph, the only thing which really got across the footlights was Rose Marie's beauty and a kind of fine scorn she had. And the audience neither understood

her beauty nor believed in her scorn.

This was in a measure her own fault—she made no concessions. If she had she might never have reached the point where concessions didn't matter. The importance of her opportunity lay in its immediate value to her—what she was able to learn from it. It gave her, as it were, a place of departure.

That night, she and the Englishman talked till late at the little café where he always took her, and till still later at their chronically disordered abiding-place. The Englishman always called it the crumpled room:

*"This is the man, all tattered and torn,
That kissed the maiden all forlorn
That milked the cow with the crumpled horn—"*

"Silly!" she said.

She found him unbelievably silly—nursery rhymes had had no part in her education—and at the same time infinitely superior. She was baffled and a little hurt by the superiority, and yet hungrily grasped what she could of it.

"You're not tattered and torn—"

"No, I always keep a tu'penny bit this side of being Lord Mayor of London."

She didn't ask him what he meant.

The things she could learn from him were more definite, like his speech—which, when she thought of it, she grew to imitate fairly well, having a reasonable gift of mimicry—and his use of knife and fork, and a smoothness of manner which he had—less definite perhaps.

Her fancy for him, however, was a thing apart from any sense of benefit. If it were but a fancy, it was an honest one, and not to be confused—save in the happy result—with other happenings seemingly like it. He was for her mysterious—almost wonderful—he gave her a glimpse, if not of heaven, at least of an eminence dizzy enough and breath-taking enough to make the ordinary human relation seem pit-like. But it didn't make her lose her balance. She had no intention of remaining forever in the burlesque show, not even for

what she thought was love. And the object of her affections appeared less wonderstruck than anyone when she failed to report on a certain Monday.

Of course he had known it for a few hours more than the rest of them; the fact that he gave no warning, made no practical and helpful use of his advance information, showed how much he really thought of Rose Marie.

There was no farewell—merely an expressman for belongings which the Englishman noticed were ready. Later an address was sent to the theater for the forwarding of strictly theatrical baggage. One has a last glimpse of the down-at-heels one, a trifle more down at heels than usual, his weaknesses blazing out all over him, and scrupulously attending to Rose Marie's scrawled behests.

She had had a most successful interview with the manager of a road company which had been playing for half a week in the city of her adoption. He had seen her and sent for her, and her final break with the burlesque being accomplished in an unostentatious manner was in part his suggestion. It was easier, too, than giving bothersome explanations. And then Rose Marie had a large way of despising anything which might pass for apology.

CHAPTER II

At twenty she was a woman, not a child, a woman by right of most of the experiences of womanhood and a number most women are satisfied without. A woman physically, certainly. She had flowered like a whole garden of the blossoms from which she took her name, and the manager of the road show came very near to allowing himself to become a fool over her. If he hadn't already had a wife, her career at this point might have been complicated by marriage. And a marriage like that would have been almost as great a pity as though she had accepted the magnanimous offer of a prosperous merchant who was so infatuated with her that he followed her—neglecting his

merchandizing shamefully—wherever the show played.

It was a musical piece, and she was by far the handsomest of eight tall and haughty ladies who wore elaborate gowns—not tights any more, except for a moment in the final act just to prove they could—and were, alternately, guests and hostesses, and in the big second act setting patrons of Mme. Fifi's millinery establishment.

The piece was booked for some of the larger cities, stopping for several weeks, and Rose Marie's learning went on apace. She learned how to smile at a head waiter, be graceful in a taxi cab, disarm the well-founded suspicions of a hotel clerk. Her necessities had long ago been supplied, she began to class with these the more obvious luxuries of the barbarian. She might have had a tendency to eat too much, having for many years gone hungry, but was warned in time by a slight increase in her already perfect weight, or drink too much—but of this she was even more wary, with the example of her father before her. She kept her naturally quick temper under fair control, and by nature hating labor, became known at the theater for her application and her reliability.

She made no pretense to other virtues. She accepted the advantages which came her way, and also the day of their reckoning. The fact that she didn't think very much saved her from injury—she remained in a sense untouched. She scorned the supplicating humanity she knew. She flung her favors, rather than offered them, and took as her right a good deal her less fortunate sisters might labor for in vain. It was surely the way to deal with favors—the way she dealt.

And as for the favors she herself received, they at least enabled her to be generous. Perhaps she was always that. But specifically generous. She used to send her mother anonymous gifts of money. Whenever her admirers gave her jewels—not magnificent necklaces and gorgeous rings, no one gave Rose Marie anything like these,

but the plainer, smaller remembrances to be made of precious metals—it was her habit to wait until the company made its next jump and then pawn the things, applying the proceeds as above mentioned. There were always more where those came from—or somewhere else. Her success was only bounded by her opportunity. And no one knew it better than the manager.

The show she was in was only one of three he had out, and on her account he favored it with an undue share of his time and attention. She was worth any man's watching. She reduced her seven companions to a total insignificance. She learned something more about dancing and singing and again she had a song to herself. She was scornful, but hardly proud.

In the final act, where she came down to the footlights, representative of a nation, a state or a century—it mattered little which—threw back her enveloping cloak, turning slowly, she was scornful rather than proud of the gaping appreciation she evoked. The fat comedian stepped forward and said, "You are glorious, my dear, glorious!"—he had a different compliment and comment for each—and then her line was, "It's a glorious nation (or state or century)"; but one night she gave instead, "Am I? I feel like a fish."

If the applause had not been so hearty she might have been taken to task. As it was, it gave her a reputation for wit—quite undeserved—for she really had no sense of comic values whatever.

She had over the rest of the world a kind of physical ascendancy.

Beside her, her companions looked like badly bred live-stock trigged out with oil and ribbons at a county fair. They were all either too thick or too thin, lumpish, spineless, never prize-winning. The daughter of a teamster and a washerwoman had at once a largeness and a fineness, a delicacy and a strength. In later years a woman artist, stumbling through the haze and steam of a Turkish bath, came upon Rose Marie reclined on a marble slab and thought herself magically trans-

ported to the Metropolitan Museum's department of Greek sculptures. To say her looks were not the greatest asset she possessed would be to be too highly prejudiced in her favor.

She remained with the road show two seasons, going as far as the coast, but not east. The manager was clever enough to keep her away from New York, where he had both a premonition and a very experienced opinion that he would lose her. But if he had understood her better, he would have realized that losing her was in any case only a question of time.

The fact was, she came to the same point with him and with his company and with the chances he had it in his gift to offer her, that she had already arrived at and passed through with her home, the button factory and the burlesque show. She again outgrew her surroundings.

It would be interesting, as well as futile, to speculate upon just what might have been her next step if Flimmerhouse hadn't found her out when he did. She might have come to New York on her own responsibility—continued her learning along lines less resistant than those he selected.

But at any rate, when he did find her she was all waiting and ready to be found. With his usual skill or luck or whatever you care to call his unerring instinct, Flimmerhouse made use of the very moment when Rose Marie was most suitable for his molding hand.

CHAPTER III

FLIMMERHOUSE was always poking about in unexpected places. The artist soul of him rebelled—almost periodically—at environments and tasks which were none the less irksome for being the rewards of his own genius. There are legends of great Arab princes who disappear from the condition of their state to wander among beggars, and—for all he knew—Flimmerhouse might have been descended from one of these. And as they would have had the best of reasons for their conduct—the need of

mingling intimately with their subjects—so he had the convenient convincing excuse of a search for obscure talent.

His journeys were quite strictly those of discovery. His theaters—his beautiful, unapproachable theaters—were, popular tradition had it, fed from sources of the utmost obscurity. He preferred to train with his own clever hands the material he used; he never took it, ready made, from others.

It was said his actors were his puppets as completely as though he were the Italian master of a Punch and Judy. But at least he picked them with a care amounting to something like divination.

It must have been this intenser discernment which was at the back of his immediate faith in Rose Marie. He recognized her at once for what she might become.

It was in a small city, nearer New York than the manager had quite intended. The curtain went up on the usual opening chorus, lines of girls, a few ratty youths in white flannels, a great deal of blaring sound. But this finally gave way to a passage, at once explanatory and comic, between the second comedian and the ingénue, and then the octet which Rose Marie led glided in and ranged themselves in attitudes of grace about the terrace of the Grand Hotel.

Flimmerhouse's course—his wanderings and his explorations—had a rare moment of entire justification. But he wasn't wandering then. He had the gift of remaining absolutely still, like an image. His emotions were mirrored, not in the customary awkward stirrings and gestures, but as if they were lights back of his remarkably translucent visage.

At varying instigations the whole fibre of the man would seem to change, and it was one of these changes which came over him at sight of Rose Marie. A little before the end of the act he sent in his card to the manager, who didn't dare refuse him the introduction he sought.

Word came that she was wanted just as Rose Marie was being hooked into

her gown by the girl whose place was next hers in the dressing-room. No details were supplied—there may have been a trace of malice-aforethought in the lack—so it was without the slightest preparation for the cataclysmic nature of her going that she threw a scarf across her exceedingly bare shoulders and stepped out, questioning and a little irritated. And there was Flimmerhouse talking with the manager in a desultory sort of way.

He removed his hat and his cigar when he saw her, so she looked at him more closely than she otherwise would have done and recognized him from his photographs.

Most girls would immediately have lost whatever veneer of poise they had been able to acquire—smirked and fidgeted, in fact shown up as badly as possible. But she had a serenity, a firmness.

She gave no sign of recognition, but waited, prettily expectant, and when the magic name was murmured—none too graciously, considering the tongueful it was—it might have been the merest incident in an already incidental life to be sought by one whom far greater than she would cheerfully have followed, for benefits to come, into any distance or danger he might suggest.

"I want to talk to you," said Flimmerhouse.

"Now?"

"No. Finish the show tonight. Come to my office in New York tomorrow. You can easily make it by three o'clock."

He had written something on a card which he gave into her hand.

She glanced questioningly at the manager, who was trying to smile.

He succeeded remarkably. "Mr. Flimmerhouse says he knows I wouldn't stand in your way, and he expects to make right any loss or inconvenience. The fact is"—the smile was now a marked failure save as a grimace—"the fact is, he knows I couldn't, even if I wanted to—not in a case like this. I most heartily congratulate you—I do indeed—and I guarantee you'll make

good in your new—your new—”

It was in words a handsome speech, but the others were only waiting for an approach to its end.

“You have something for me?”

“We’ll see about that tomorrow. Now you must go and I must go—I must get a train. Good-bye. Be careful tomorrow in crossing Broadway. I should hate to think of anyone as beautiful as you are being injured.”

Flimmerhouse had a trick—rarely used except by women—of turning on or off a kind of animal magnetism, apparently at will.

Rose Marie stared at his rapidly retreating back.

She thought he walked as she would have liked to have danced. Dancing was the only term of comparison she had for him. She might have realized him more articulately had there been others, but he was new to her absolutely. She’d never seen, consciously, either a poet or a pirate, a barbaric mask or a piece of fine porcelain, therefore she couldn’t describe him to herself with any such wealth of suitable and suggestive terms, but dancing she knew.

She wondered why a creature like that should call her beautiful. Of course he might have been in jest. Perhaps he never made jests. She was strangely occupied with this personal side of Flimmerhouse, considering the door he was holding open for her.

The manager had stopped smiling now and turned on his heel. He couldn’t trust himself to speak. But Rose Marie finished his show for him, as Flimmerhouse had said. Then she went straight to her room and started to pack, at which congenial occupation the dethroned one found her.

It was easier to let him in than not to do so, and she was so preoccupied with other matters that she chose the easier course. If she had fully understood the future, and what the future held and didn’t hold, she might have paid him more attention.

CHAPTER IV

THOUGH she had come fairly near to the tender passion with the down-at-heels Englishman, Rose Marie had never been in love. And in love a miss is almost as good as a mile. The superintendent of the button factory she merely tolerated for obvious motives, and the manager of the road show she very positively disliked, though she was clever enough about not letting him see it.

For the rest, her experiences were so exceedingly casual that love was not in question. There had been a boy in the road show—until he lost his job—with whom she had rather played at love. He gratified her desire for ownership, she could be honest and careless and profane in his company, and she had nothing to gain from him and everything to lose.

But love—love that is of the flesh and mind and spirit, in which all three are welded, which has a growing, living entity of its own, rising and falling, gaining and losing, a thing of tears, laughter, exaltation, depths—this she had never known, had never even known its need. And it didn’t come to her for several days, until after several long extraordinary interviews, that she was in love with Flimmerhouse.

When it did it seemed to her such a funny thing for her to be, such a kind of presumptuous, reckless thing, that she burst out laughing in the middle of the street and a passing man thought she was a little drunk and spoke to her. She told him, however, to mind his own business, and something in her tone was convincing.

A few months after that no one would ever have made the mistake of thinking her drunk. She shed all traces of her early self as completely as a snake sheds its skin.

Rose Marie Davis, protégée of Flimmerhouse, was no more the girl of the road show than the girl of the road show was the abused, barefoot child of the teamster’s household. No more and no less. There was only the merest

thread of character, which runs through even the most varied progress.

She proved an earnest student of the art of acting. In any work she had a directness of attack her lack of general education only served to emphasize. She split no hairs. She gathered no flowers by the wayside.

But Flimmerhouse would have allowed little time for flower-gathering. And it was the only return she was able to make to him for all he did—for her lessons, her apartment, her maid, her clothes, and actual money in her hand—that she should give him, in the way he wanted, her best, her closest attention. But accustomed as she was to more tangible payments, even her best seemed little enough—barely honest. He explained it to her over and over—how it was his method of dealing in futures—how, in his opinion, she had a future which she now mortgaged to him for what he intended to make of it.

"You mean you're going to make me a star—a great actress?"

"My dear child, I never said I was going to make you a great actress. But a star—if you do exactly as I say—"

"I'll always do as you say, Mr. Flimmerhouse. But you're too good to me—I feel I ought not to take it from you—"

"Oh, well, it won't be long now before you'll have a little part—a character bit that won't be too difficult. I mean you won't have to sustain a human mood farther than you're able—hold on too long—"

"Hold on? But you are—you're too good."

Their talks often got away from her like this. She would have been easier in an atmosphere where the personal side was more intrusive.

It became increasingly apparent that her great man's interest was purely professional. He didn't seem to care in any personal sense at all. And it evidently wasn't that he didn't admire her. It wasn't that he didn't praise her. She was exceeding, he assured her, his fondest hopes—and with the assurance he smiled at her as he might have smiled,

she thought, at a wax dummy in a window.

It was extraordinary that any man should so stoop to analyze the problems of a woman, and yet remain abstract. She was disturbed by the realization that she wasn't good enough for him—worth while enough—not even bad enough perhaps—but nothing—utterly beneath his notice. Then he shouldn't have noticed her at all—should have left her to the mercies of an encroaching fate. She wasn't nearly as grateful to him as she would have been if she hadn't loved him. All he did for her went small in comparison with what he didn't do.

At first, of course, in spite of her feeling of presumption, she had expected, gloriously, that he wanted of her what everyone else had wanted, and her love for him was flecked with moments of anger because her expectations went unmet.

Anger at him and a bitter contempt for the thing that she was that Flimmerhouse did not want. She tried many times to stir him, but all her little arts and snares seemed so ineffectually cheap, so inadequate to the situation. It would have been far easier if she hadn't cared so much. She might have taken a chance then, either of victory or loss.

And beside this handicap of caring, she knew it was with his help that she was making her way along a difficult road. She had no wish to lose that, either. It was as if, no matter where she turned, she was weighted with her responsibilities.

Her beauty, never coarse, underwent a further process of refinement. Not a deadening, an intenser life, rather. Her hazel eyes were like stained sunlight, her hair—combining brown and gold—took on a look of fusing metals. She had always walked as a reigning empress might, but now there was something added—it was as if she made her way through trailing clouds. She began to receive a quality of homage new in even her varied experience.

But general admiration meant little to her. She lived only for the approval

of Flimmerhouse. Everything she did, everything she thought, everything she was, she judged by his standards rather than her own. To the religious, God is omniscient, omnipotent and ever-present. Supplant God by Flimmerhouse, and you have his hold. His image was constantly before her—would have made of any lesser image an intruder.

She had no background and no inheritance not actively wrong, she had been quite suddenly uprooted from habits of life for which she really had but slight distaste, she lived now in a state of nervous excitations brought about both by her unsatisfied passion and the character of her work; and yet by the most conventional standards her present life could have been judged blameless.

It was something more than the power of love which saved her, it was a power—a transformation—within herself. She was forever discovering depths and distances that were like the opening of long-locked rooms. She was afraid of destroying this new country of her nature. She didn't think of it in terms of fear—she didn't think at all, her processes being emotional rather than mental—but her dread of a prospective loss acted automatically like a brake. She looked at men—even at some of the men she used to know when they happened, as they sometimes did, to cross her path—she looked at them with a sort of surprised coldness.

Even these last meant less than nothing to her—even her memories of them were vague and blurred. She attained the reputation of being absolutely true to Flimmerhouse.

CHAPTER V

MARY DAVIS—plain Mary Davis was what she had become—did very well with the bit he found for her in one of his new productions. But no one could have told from seeing her in it that she was either young or handsome. This secret was well hidden beneath skilfully applied shadows and awkward clothes. She was an old Irishwoman, and had upon the stage five minutes of rage. It

was just that—a long curse—but mild enough compared with the rage she managed to stifle within herself when Flimmerhouse gave her the part.

The "bit" had long been talked of, and she expected an opportunity to wear a magnificent gown at a dinner party—smoke a cigarette gracefully.

But after a few weeks of the other she knew that Flimmerhouse had been right. She had to get away from the fact of her past—the fact that she had ever been a show girl—time enough for youth and beauty when this distance was fully established. The part was hardly her creation; she had been trained and coached to the last inch, but after weeks she somehow felt that it became so. The rage at least she made her own.

That rage, night after night, was an outlet for all the dissatisfactions of her soul and body. It left her limp, relaxed all the hard gathered nerves, enabled her to go on with her existence. It had come to her just in time, though she didn't know it. Flimmerhouse might have suspected it, however. He might have suspected a good deal about Rose Marie of which he appeared—always—to be totally unaware.

Her next rôle was still character, so called, but not so old and of wider compass—a woman of forty, and with a past at least one-half as lurid as Rose Marie's own. It was wonderful how they were able to make that fresh glory appear but the remnants of a youth gone by. A smouldering woman—and the young actress discovered that she herself did smoulder. For again, in spite of outside care, the thing she portrayed became a part of herself, and her own nature seemed to expand to it almost as directly as a glove finger might be pulled wide by a glove-stretcher.

It wasn't that what she played was bigger or more important than she was herself; but any part, she found, had angles and protuberances which had to be accommodated. She did her best with them—as always—and all without any very conscious or deliberate effort.

Of course for this particular portrayal she had advantages—she was by nature quite overwhelmingly suited to it—though this last it might have taken a Flimmerhouse to suspect. In that moment at the end, a moment so frankly melodramatic that only a Flimmerhouse would have dared it in the midst of serious and modern drama—that moment when she swayed and fell and lay full length for her enemies to triumph, she so much more than met spectacular requirements.

If Flimmerhouse had not thought it premature, she could have had both a popular and a critical acclaim much earlier than she did have them. But she had to wait, still piling up her preparation. It was as if, despite her striving—even her measure of success—she were forced to live in a world where reward was constantly around the corner.

She had curious dreams in which she stood behind bars, Flimmerhouse on the other side, holding—just beyond reach—desirable food and apparel and indeterminate bright objects. And there were other dreams where she seemed to have shed her humanity to become a poodle in an animal act, Flimmerhouse the trainer, and she begging and dancing about for dainties held aloft. The audience was wild in its applause.

But all this was grossly unfair to Flimmerhouse—it only showed what contrary phenomena dreams are. He did for her so much. And in their personal relation he grew to a charming friendliness, treated her with a kind of punctilious courtesy rare enough. But her love for him was as hopeless as ever.

At first the solution had seemed so natural—so easy of achievement.

Every time she entered her little apartment it was as though a ghostly Flimmerhouse entered with her. Why shouldn't he be there? It was his—he was paying for it—and in so far as she could discover he had no ties to prevent his full freedom.

And as for any virtue—any scruple—if you only listened to half the stories

you heard, if you only looked at the man himself. . . . Why, you might as well have accused Solomon of being monastic! He gave no effect of grossness—it wasn't that which took him so far from any native sanctity—but you felt his refinements were epicurean rather than holy.

His principles, his doctrines, were as indefinite as his extraction, which was very indefinite indeed—this matter of race being less understood in man than cattle. Though, as for that, even the lower animals have to begin somewhere.

Yes, at first the solution had appeared very simple, but as time progressed—carrying with it the changes that time does carry—the simplicity was clouded. Her existence, without him, seemed less like a gaping void. In one sense she wasn't without him—so little without him that there almost might have been performed some skilful transfusing operation by which the fluid of his brain had enlivened hers.

It was just because he was so close, perhaps, that any closer bond between them was at times unthinkable, and held a promise and a possibility of bondage only comparable to the chain of union connecting those celebrated twins from Siam. And much as she would have welcomed any approach, her season of singleness had formed a sort of frame around her—a frame from which she would at last have had to be forcibly cut, as the canvas of a picture is cut by a thief.

As time went on, her thought of Flimmerhouse, her longing and her visions, grew to a poignancy like the sharp beauty of a rift in clouds—as distant and yet as blinding.

One of the things wrong with her was that she was lonely. Never gregarious, she had nevertheless been accustomed to a continual humming companionship—hardly a minute really alone—and in the rarefied atmosphere in which Flimmerhouse had folded her this was replaced by privacies hitherto undreamt. Even at the theater she had a dressing-room of her own, a place wonderfully self-contained in all its

furnishings of convenience—it even had a door that locked.

She was everywhere tactfully shown the way, taught, given the benefit of an experience riper than her own. Everyone was infinitely patient with her stupidities and kind at her capacities, but she was in need of something more than mere appreciation. And she might have found her need—friendship or anything else—if it hadn't been for Flimmerhouse, who was always ready, if more or less invisibly, to interpose his own gracefully attenuated presence between his protégée and the blasting influences of the vulgar.

It was as though he held a cup to her lips and forced her to drink the full bitter draught, the assumption being if she didn't yield to his force she wasn't worth his pains. And she accepted—as she always accepted—his terms.

Not even her worst enemy, and she had enemies, both now and in her more flamboyant period, could have accused her of being a weakling. It was proof enough she wasn't weak, the fact that she hadn't perished, the fact that now, with much of her youth still ahead, she had left so many milestones behind her.

CHAPTER VI

It wasn't the speed of her advance which was remarkable. There was nothing to make Flimmerhouse or anyone else dizzy in the deliberate manner of her course.

As Flimmerhouse watched her he was reminded, rather, of a wave rolling in towards shore, or perhaps the ebb and flow of the tides—controlled, he had heard, by the moon? Was he the moon? No, decidedly no. And yet she couldn't have been more his . . .

She thought he didn't love her. But he did love her. He loved her during those early years as an artist loves his own creation—loves and hates it as he might love and hate himself.

What would she have become without him? The chances would have been all against her—they had been against her as it was. His had been

the eye to recognize—a fact giving her rather more claim on him than his on her—his, also, the hand to withhold.

He knew that as well as she did. He knew where he had seemed to fail her. But had he failed her?

As a potter relentlessly thrusts his delicately moulded clay into the firing furnace, trusting both flame and substance, so Flimmerhouse could have been accused of being unrelenting in keeping away from Rose Marie the cooling, blessed air of human contacts.

He had denied her, not only the one thing, but everything—he knew it as well as she did. But if she were lonely, she needed loneliness as the clay needs heat; if she were crying—even for a mate—her tears would serve to wash away, not guilt (Flimmerhouse would hardly be concerned with such a word), but habits, acts, occasions, of stultifying memory.

If she had found out love, her old novitiate of lighter loves must find some purpose other than as a bell for her awakening. No careless crudity of satisfactions, no avid acceptances of any proffered boon, could have repaid the artist in Flimmerhouse—and what was there in Flimmerhouse except the artist?—could have repaid him for the injury worked to the very fibres of his fabrication?

His fabrication. And yet there were times with Rose Marie when he felt himself the merest spectator. He remained immobile, she swept onward. If her progress was like the flowing of the tides, he must have been the impeccable white-clad loungeur sitting on the beach and wondering—a bit idly and yet with interest, too—how soon his feet would be wet from the incoming water. Yet tides flow out as well as in.

He was the same man that he had been on the night when he had first seen her, the same delicately adjusted mechanism of impulses and wisdoms, the same scruples stayed his hand and the same ruthlessness drove him to the same heights. But she had changed vitally, fundamentally—changed, he thought,

CHAPTER VII

more greatly than even he had ever imagined it possible for human material to be changed.

Take, as an example, merely, her admittedly unrequited love. He couldn't help realizing from the first how plain, at first, the end had seemed to her. And then he realized also her hesitations, as they arrived—her gradual deviation from the straight path or prospect of sin.

The lighter barriers between them became finally as much of her building as of his. It might have been amusing, knowing what he knew, to have watched any other woman so surround herself. But nothing Rose Marie did was ever amusing. She was too magnificent, one was too lost in admiration of her glory.

Her glory that was in part his own. With most of his work he would have forgotten to give himself such credit, he was never self-conscious about his results, but with her his teaching her to act was so easily the lesser half of what he had done for her. He would promise to teach almost anyone to act, provided they had the power of surrendering themselves absolutely to his will. Though with most people, it didn't matter what you taught them—whatever they learned became in their hands so unimportant. Rose Marie could make more out of a very little learning. . . .

But in her case, what he had taught her transcended any mere histrionics. He could watch her smoulder and sway and swoon, lying there a clustered light on the great dim stage, the draggled glitter of grimed spangles clinging close—he could watch her audience—his audience, it was too—rise to it as they would have risen to a bull-baiting.

And yet it didn't mean nearly so much to him, that splendid spectacle, as to see Rose Marie bursting into his dark old office like a young Aurora, standing there before him, half apologetic and half brave, always with a smile and a book and a question. One would as well have thought—a man of his experience—of planning the seduction of a schoolgirl.

FLIMMERHOUSE fulfilled his promise to her, he made her a star, her name—Mary Davis—blazing in lights, and all her youth and beauty at last allowed to blaze.

He had been right in saying he could do that for her, and right also in predicting she would never be great. But she was somehow compelling and human. It showed how little her years of burlesque had counted that her forte was emotional rather than comic, and with no mean emotional sweep either. She had lost none of the old physical ascendancy, the thing—and it wasn't her beauty entirely—which had set her apart in the days long past.

Without being herself oversized, she still had the trick of making everyone else shrink to insignificance—and what further qualification for stardom could there be? And she had the trick—perhaps helped by her lack of an early training in control—of giving herself over to a mood, a sensation, as tossing leaves surrender to a wind; though with it all a sort of high austerity that was like the austerity of the very aged or the very young.

Perhaps the very young could most often lay claim to this serene untouched confidence. Flimmerhouse noticed the same thing in Jenny. Jenny was Rose Marie's little sister, whom she had taken to live with her.

It showed how great Rose Marie's independence of him became that Jenny arrived on the scene quite as a surprise to him. But when he knew the circumstances he gave his unqualified approval.

It was an outlet for her affections of which he never would have thought himself. But he couldn't think of everything.

During all the years, Rose Marie had never ceased to send money to her family. And she had at last made a compromise with anonymity and taken a post-office box for the purpose of receiving their acknowledgments and scanty news.

She was about as free of family ties as anyone well could be in a related world, but it was part of her development that in proportion as she grew farther away from her origin she grew to taking on a greater burden of responsibility towards her truck-driving, laundering kin. She gave them more attention and infinitely more help than when she had been forced, through dire threats, to assist in hanging out the clothes.

They accepted her help greedily, the wages of her shame—they didn't believe in her having become an actress—her likeness and her name, even if they had seen them in the day's news, would have been unrecognizable—they accepted, and she was saved from any sudden descent both by distance and her repeated warning that such an attempt on their part would automatically result in further assistance being withdrawn.

Her father met his death, characteristically, by being drunk and falling from his truck to be trampled by his horses. Her mother, after that release, and thanks to her, no longer washed. Her brothers and sisters scattered their several ways, married, worked, struggled.

But Rose Marie never encouraged any length of narration, and the Davis family were themselves too snowed under by the stress of living to descant upon its phases. They kept not only the substance but the spirit of her command not to bother her.

Therefore she was really very much unprepared when her mother wrote to her, hinting only too broadly that it would be very acceptable if she were to take Jenny off their hands.

Jenny was much the youngest of the family, born since Rose Marie had left, and—as her mother gave assurance—“pretty like yu.” All the rest of them could more or less take care of themselves now, but Jenny was still comparatively helpless.

“Yu have more time than enny of us in the daytime, and at nite she'd be aslepe—” So figured the thoughtful parent.

In due season the child arrived, having come the latter part of her journey in sole charge of the conductor. She arrived safely in the midst of possible hazard, and after much scrubbing and clothing and a good deal of preliminary instruction was taken into the presence of the great man.

Owing to a natural misunderstanding in the matter of relationship if Flimmerhouse had been subject to shocks he would have had the shock of his life.

Instead, he was delightfully calm.

“Oh—I didn't know—”

“But she isn't mine—”

“No?”

“She's my little sister.”

The situation was explained, and then—

“I should have no possible reason for saying she was my sister if she wasn't—none whatever!”

Rose Marie in the maternal character—it was really more maternal than sisterly, whatever the actual facts—was new to Flimmerhouse.

But he had always found her like that, uncovering new strata of herself. And he recognized how the child filled for her a necessity—she was a tie, a balance, she made of Rose Marie a member of the social system in a sense even he could not do. He could lead her on to triumph—Mary Davis, blazing bright—he could be, on her account, the object of a general envy really far too sharp—and yet, for her, the child was stiff with elements he lacked. Her relation to Jenny had the solidity of a virtue never his. And even her triumph, the pinnacle of her success—and it wasn't so much a pinnacle as a wide, splendid plateau upon which Flimmerhouse had placed her—was firmer, somehow, because of her domestic cares.

It wasn't that she made of the child a nuisance, she was eminently practical and non-sentimental, in fact as soon as the weather was suitable she sent her down to a carefully selected place in the country with a more than carefully selected nurse. But she constantly considered her. And this consideration

was just the added touch that Rose Marie required.

It seemed to Flimmerhouse, and to her also, as if little Jenny had brought her luck. And it was such an easy casting of bread upon the waters. Flimmerhouse almost wished that the child had been his own.

And then he allowed himself to wonder whether he would have accepted her so whole-heartedly if she had been what he had in the first place thought she was. Would he have been jealous then, instead of acquiescent? Would he have welcomed so cordially what her presence accomplished for Rose Marie? Jenny did what he himself could not do. Why couldn't he? Couldn't Rose Marie feel maternal about him—consider him—care for him?

CHAPTER VIII

IN one sense, Jenny was but a wisp of grass in a hayfield in comparison with Flimmerhouse. That is to say, in the sense of being a stimulating emotional influence.

In that sense, for Rose Marie, the child didn't exist at all. She had no wish to hold her close, press her to her heart, weep over her helplessness. She had no wish for children of her own—she was glad that Jenny wasn't hers, and she would have felt for her no greater tenderness even if she had been.

But even then she couldn't have been more kind, or brought to the little issues the child aroused a more thoughtful attention. She never was kind to Flimmerhouse like that. It may have been that he had never given her the chance to be, or that her relation to him—as a relation—had too little substance for kindness, for care. It was a thing all of fervors and ecstasies, a sort of worship within herself like the worship of a pilgrim at a shrine. And it had, always, a kind of ephemeral quality, which yet had managed to stand pretty well the test of years. It had never had to stand the test of reality. Now, as for Jenny, there was nothing in her relation to Jenny that wasn't real.

If Flimmerhouse had been some ten years younger than he was, and a good bit more than ten years less wise, she might have cared for him on the maternal side—she might have felt towards him more as she did towards Jenny—added to the other ways she felt.

But with him too much had gone before, and the very constitution of maternity demands that nothing shall have gone before—it must strike at the source. And with Flimmerhouse any source was a long way off. He was ageless, supreme, independent. She became independent of him too—but hers was an independence merely material—she reached a point where she could have walked her road without him. He was independent in a far larger way than that. And she hated him for it, and then trembled at her own audacity.

Flimmerhouse was like a mountain ever visible from her window—a mountain whose snows and greens marked her seasons, over which her sun rose and—paradoxically—behind which it set. And you couldn't be maternal with the earth itself. The earth itself was mother.

His shadow and his reflection were ever in her sight. His carefully modulated voice was her music and her thunder. His delicate hands shaped for her the very face of nature. Leaving Jenny out of it, of course, he so blocked and filled her world that she saw the small remainder which was not Flimmerhouse through his eyes. She saw how unworthy it was of her or of him or of anything—hardly human.

It seemed to her sometimes as if it all lay sprawling about her feet, as if this remainder which was not Flimmerhouse was all filled with mouths agape and tongues a-hanging. She refused the ugly spectacle even a glance. She could have had so much so easily, but was it any wonder she abstained? The feast always spread sickened her—the ever-present plenty. It always had been spread—almost ever since she could remember. Every mouth that gaped reminded her of other mouths

that had not gaped in vain. Flimmerhouse alone was unapproachable. He alone wasn't waiting for her smile. That was all she needed to give now—a faint smile of thanks, a bow. She could now confer as great a favor by accepting a bouquet as she once might have conferred by allowing to be dropped into her purse a hundred-dollar bill. And her nod was as eagerly received as had been anything she had ever offered in return for the crisper gift.

Flimmerhouse had done that for her anyway. Oh, her redemption by him was very real, after all. And she couldn't have been redeemed by him if she hadn't loved him, any more than the unbeliever can receive absolution at the hands of the priest.

He formed for her a symbol, a graven image of God, a cross clasped by a nun. Her triumph, her success, what were these but the spilt blood of sacrifice? Was it any wonder that he would have made of any lesser image an intruder?

He was, perhaps, too much of a god, too little of a man. But the god was for her alone, the man had been for many—just as she had been for many men. He had been married once, before divorce or death had cut that unlikely tie. There were women she had seen, had talked to, who had roused in him and had from him much which only served to emphasize her own unbelievable failure. For she had failed. She discounted any great nobleness of self-denial. It couldn't have cost him such a great price to bury the man in the god, for if it had the cost might easily have been too high for him—for any man—to bear, so her experience of men had taught her.

Suppose, on the other hand, that she had needed—as some women undoubtedly did need—the very side presented to her, lack of which Flimmerhouse valued for her most—suppose that. Would he have come to her rescue then if he hadn't as an individual, as a man, desire to do so? Would he have met her need then merely to complete the

abstract creation of the artist—wire the puppet?

It took years of her rather slow processes of decision to answer this negatively. As well imagine a Pharaoh bending his own back beneath stones for the building of a pyramid as Flimmerhouse using himself for any purpose not exquisitely of his own choice! He had a kind of superciliousness of physique—he wore gloves in the heat of summer and the heaviest furs that ever man was burdened with to guard against the cold of winter—he could stand on a dirty stage, surrounded by sweating, swearing, shirt-sleeved crowds, and be utterly saved from any suggestion of toil, be as aloof, and as dominant, as some dark-robed counselor who sits at ease in the chamber of the king and hears at a distance the raging of the battle he has plotted.

There was a legend—there were always legends about Flimmerhouse—that he had sprung from the gutters of a foreign port. Well, lilies grow best in mud—take her own case. The metaphor was hardly new, but Rose Marie didn't know this—her knowledge was as simple and nearly as undiverse as it ever had been—a weapon, never a hindrance. Her sins, even, had been like that—never for the mere sake of sinning. She was not like Flimmerhouse, who might sin quite for the mere sake of sinning and for no other sake.

He possessed the key to a vast storehouse of experiences undiscovered and undisowned. He had no repentance, no regret. But then he had little knowledge—except possibly by theory—of really virtuous humanity. His views and his standards might have had power to shock many who were far less meticulous than he.

Even Rose Marie, who could look you as straight in the face as an eagle is said to look at the sun, could drop her eyes in his presence—in the presence of a cold breath of wisdom for which she was never prepared.

After years of their close association he still held his ability to surprise her. He surprised her in such little ways,

sometimes—this in spite of his being forever in her consciousness. She would be waiting for him, watching for him, watching a door through which he might reasonably be expected to come, and he would always manage—not intentionally of course—to appear before her as though he had not made use of the usual facilities of approach.

He surprised her in greater ways, too. And yet she knew him well. She wondered if she didn't know him in some ways better than those other women had known him—better, even, than cleverer women than she.

She knew him so well, but it was the god in him she knew—or what she called the god. Cleverer women might have called it the creator—inasmuch as any artist is a creator. Cleverer women might have named him rightly, and pressed the advantage which she never pressed—the overwhelming amount of her debt to him. She owed him everything, and she neither felt nor displayed the gratitude which they would have used against him, to pry out the man from the god.

But her worship of him was all from afar. Even if Flimmerhouse the man should become one of the hungry mob which clamored about her, she felt that for her Flimmerhouse the god would still remain impregnable.

The shrine she knelt at was for her inviolate. It would remain that, she felt, to the end.

Perhaps Rose Marie was incapable of loving the man in Flimmerhouse—that is to say, the real man, what there was of him. The man she might have loved would have been a very plain and simple man.

And yet her love for what she took for Flimmerhouse saved her as that other love could not have done at that late date—or perhaps ever. It was an ironic twist to a fortune otherwise pre-ordained, that Flimmerhouse, neither plain nor simple nor even good, should have worked the miracle of a salvation.

For the man in Flimmerhouse was a strange creature, and in a manner shocking. It was small wonder she felt

in his presence a cold breath of wisdom—a wisdom perhaps suited to a god, but wholly unnecessary to a mortal. He lacked virtue in a way that Rose Marie never had lacked it.

Even his love for her—when it came—lacked that. His love was the kind of love you might feel for a light you had looked at for a long time—a swaying, moving brilliance that you knew at last you had to grasp and crush and break and hide. It was the kind of love that racked his body and what was left of his soul, the love left over from all his other loves, born of the hope none of these had ever filled, the dream—not of the god—but of the man. And Rose Marie didn't understand. She was too good a woman. She hadn't been afraid of the god, but she found herself afraid of the man, and as scornful of him as she was of other men.

His luck, his skill, his unerring instinct, failed him for once. He was delivered into her hands, helpless at last—more helpless than little Jenny. But it was too late, he had overshot his mark. And so he still remained for her, at the end of years, the great, the unsolvable problem. He would remain that to the end of her long and happy life—even after he had become but a part of her half-forgotten past, even after the man in Flimmerhouse had stepped down from the god and offered her all for which she had ever hoped, and she had refused to accept what he prayed her on his knees to take.

He came to her suddenly, shattering her image, terrifying her to retreat. He was no longer a symbol. He was no longer anything that he ever had been. It was as though he had stepped from another planet. He described himself as a swimmer who had been caught in the current and carried by the tide, who was clinging to her as a man might cling to save himself from drowning.

But she had no wish to drown with him in the dark water. Young, vigorous woman that she was, she knew then that she must have a clear stream and

another than he—almost any other—who could swim with her strongly. He offered her marriage, as if that would light the blackness—all her arrears of longing to be paid, and overpaid, by this shivering intruder who was Flimmerhouse, and yet not Flimmerhouse. And yet he must have been Flimmerhouse, because he killed her love, and no one but he could have done such. Rose Marie felt her love die within her as a woman might feel the convulsive death of a child. It was quite as sudden and as physical as that.

And as her love died, the strain and stress that had brought her so far, that had carried her to heights, that had taken her so straight through those curiously full and curiously empty years—this strain eased. And a peace came to her, and a quiet, and she looked out to a world crowded with a glory of life from which she had only to choose.

No, Flimmerhouse was no longer good enough—good in the strict and narrow sense of the word. Nor would he have been for any other woman to whom virtue had come.



THE LIAR

By Harry Kemp

I DARE not tell them : so I kiss, and lie,—
 I must have love, as summer must have rain;
 And yet I know not which were greater pain :
 To kiss them not; or feel Her standing by
 While their soft, alien lips to mine reply. . . .
 The clouted fisher that lets down his seine,
 Losing some marvel of translucent stain
 Must rest content, perforce, with smaller fry!



A FOOLISH woman wishes that her husband understood her; a wise woman hopes that he never will.



A CLEVER woman is one who conceals her follies not from her enemies but from her friends.



A CHARMING woman is one who says little but leaves one wondering.

CHIVALRY

By Frank La Forrest

AS he walked across the Brooklyn Bridge late at night his attention was attracted by the actions of a woman. She would climb on the railing, stand poised for a moment and then shrink back, apparently afraid to jump. He hurried forward eager to help a woman in distress. He gave her the necessary push.



A POET

By Louis Untermeyer

THERE was a late and lonely nightingale,
That leaned its bosom on an icy thorn;
And, from the branch that threatened to impale,
A living ecstasy was born.

So you have conquered agony, and torn
A triumph out of torture. O rejoice
While, from the stab of loneliness and scorn,
Rises the rapture of your voice.



A KISS is like an act in a vaudeville show. One always wonders what is coming next.



"THE Unknown Purple"—any woman's past.



THE ROUND ROBIN

By Ford Douglas

I

WORDS failed Mr. Hooper; they always did when he was agitated. He floundered blindly, and the indignation which tortured every fiber of his being lacked expression for the mere want of vocabulary.

"'S fine government!" He paused to let his indignation sink in, and then added with supreme contempt, "Yes, it is—not! Whose business is it, I ask you, if I take a drink or not? Is it the *government's* business? No, it ain't! What right has the government to interfere with a matter of personal rights? Where's this thing going to stop? What'll it put the kibosh on next?"

"Tea and coffee, no doubt," said Mr. Rogers, a new member of the club.

He spoke with bitterness, though a consumer of neither, feeling the occasion auspicious to interject his voice and personality into the clubroom—the grillroom.

There was no noticeable applause and he sank back into obscurity.

Mr. Ed. Baker, wholesale groceries, gained attention by the simple expedient of pulling the call-bell over to him—a ruse to which he was addicted.

Having thus obtained an audience, he closed his hand gently—and silently—over the bell, saying:

"Look what it's done to us. Twenty thousand dollars' worth of delicatessen stuff we've got on hand, and what are we going to do with it? Who's going to eat Bismark herring—with soda pop? It's a dead loss!"

Captain Ned Howard also nursed a grievance. The Captain, in civil life a

provision broker, had been commissioned the day before the armistice was signed, and his service covered a period just long enough for him to get into a uniform and be photographed. The calamitous and unwarranted intervention of peace had cut short his military career, the same being that of assistant buyer of canned beans, and so left him with a lasting sense of outrage toward all higher authority.

"Listen to me," he said. "When I was in the service, a few weeks ago, I came up here with three other captains and tried to buy a drink. Did we get it? No, we didn't get it! Just because we were officers in the uniform of the United States army, the government held out on us. Can you beat that? And sitting right over at the next table were four or five British officers, horse-buyers or something, licking up brandy and sodas till the cows came home. Now what do you know 'bout that!"

At other tables conversation was as bitter. The grillroom was, and had been for months, the storm center of furious protest. The fateful day of nation-wide prohibition was slowly but surely approaching, and our members were in a state of panic.

At first the attack of the drys was regarded as a joke. Indeed a revel of the hugest proportions was planned to celebrate the victory that was to be ours. Then came the tidings that left us dazed.

Followed then a time when there was a feeling that somehow, someday, the awful judgement would be averted at the last moment by an unknown and mysterious power. There was no explanation of this, other than that it was

a "hunch"—and a hunch is inexplicable, as any sport will tell you.

But the mysterious power failed to materialize and grillroom speculation became endless. Our lawyer members were in constant demand. Over and over again did these gladiators of the bar explain the various phases of the prohibitory amendment; and as often were they forced to listen to schemes of evasion, the same being legal subterfuges invented by certain dealers in hardware, hides, tallow and lumber.

Let us now return to the corner table.

"What good is this, or any other club going to be?" demanded Mr. Hooper fiercely. "You cut out lick and who wants to belong? Damme if I'm going to sit around here and drink chocolate nut sundaes! I'll resign first!"

"I will, too," chimed in Mr. Fish.

As a matter of fact Mr. Fish seldom drank anything of an alcoholic nature, yet under the spell of Mr. Hooper's bitterness he felt vaguely that his rights had been invaded, too.

"We'll all resign!" declared Captain Howard. "We'll put the matter up to the directors—no drinks, no members. Say, how's that for a slogan: 'No drinks, no members'?" He repeated it over several times. "Say, that's all right, ain't it? I'm pretty good at that sort of thing. I remember—"

"Never mind what you remember," interrupted Mr. Hooper. "Life's too short. We want to get this thing started, and we'll do it right now. We'll draw up a petition—a round robin—that'll tell the directors just where we stand. Then it's up to them."

The round robin idea, sponsored by Mr. Hooper and backed by a round of drinks at his expense, caught the popular fancy at once. Paper and pens were called for, and the six insurgents about the table set to work on its draft—a labor that engaged them far into the night and left them, when the bar closed, very pleasantly jingled.

II

It is a well-known fact that the average American will sign anything. Ex-

periment has proven that a blanket death warrant left on the counter of a corner cigar store will receive from forty to sixty signatures an hour, the exact number within these limits depending solely on weather conditions. And so, after a week of activity on the part of Messrs. Howard and Hooper, eighty per cent of the club roster had endorsed their revolutionary document, the remaining twenty per cent being either out of town or not in attendance.

The epoch-making directors' meeting and the presentation of the petition were scheduled for eight, and many stayed down to dinner. At five the insurgents called a caucus in the grill, a meeting that taxed the capacity of the room.

The spirit of the members here assembled was not long in doubt. Inflammatory speeches were the order of the day and enthusiasm became incandescent. The bar did a record business, and the chairman of the house committee, Mr. Webster, received the highest praise for his foresight in hiring two extra bartenders to meet the exigencies of the occasion. Cries of "No drinks, no members!" were heard on every hand, and to this was added, "Down with Dumbeck!"

Explanatory of this last, is the singular fact that our president, Mr. August P. Dumbeck, was held, in a measure, responsible for all our troubles. The reason for this no one knew precisely. It had, however, been whispered about that Dumbeck had a cousin in the German army, and this was enough to condemn him. For the time he labored under great business and social difficulties.

Promptly at eight the grillroom meeting adjourned to the directors' room; and here Mr. Hooper, despite the protests of the somewhat pale Mr. Dumbeck, whom he found seated at the head of the long table, ordered drinks sent in. This was a most unusual procedure, as Mr. Dumbeck plainly told us, but a roar of approval from the crowd silenced him, and amid much confusion the meeting at last came to order.

Routine business first engaged the attention of the directors. There was the usual complaint of Mr. Abner B. McNabb, our oldest as well as our most bellicose member, regarding the breath of the club barber. This was read hurriedly and thrown in the waste-basket. Next came the grilling of delinquents who had not paid their house bills—a thing that brought embarrassment to some who were present. A few accounts were approved and ordered paid, an application for membership was referred to a secret committee, the names of its members being read aloud by the blundering secretary; and then Mr. Dumbeck unfolded a formidable-looking document, with the sight of which we were all familiar. It was the round robin.

"We have here," he began, "a petition—"

At this point he was interrupted by the arrival of a corps of waiters staggering under loads of glassware and drinks pyramided high on their trays, and his further remarks were drowned under cries of "Here, I didn't order Scotch!" "Gimme that fizz!" "I've got your cocktail and you got my rye," "Pass over that highball."

Mr. Dumbeck waited for a lull in the din and began again—only to be interrupted by the booming voice of Mr. Webster who instructed the waiters to "Shoot 'em again all around."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," protested Mr. Dumbeck, "if we cannot have order I shall be forced to clear the room."

Voices were heard in various parts of the room to the effect that their owners would "like to see anyone clear the room."

"We have here," began Mr. Dumbeck, raising his voice to be heard above the confusion, "a petition to the Board to continue the sale of liquor in the club. It bears the signature of more than a majority of our members, and it states in unequivocal terms that the failure to do this will be followed by their resignations. The matter is now open for discussion."

Our president certainly did not invite the views of the members as such. All rules and precedents confined the discussion to our twelve directors, but here was a spotlight opportunity for our greatest pest, and he grabbed it immediately.

Mr. Foster T. Flood rose from his seat, his hand aloft, commanding attention. Indeed, his very presence commanded attention. For he was a slab-sided man of over six feet, garbed in raiment designed for youths of high-school age. Originating somewhere in the back fringe of the alfalfa belt, he had been roped, thrown, tied and brought to the city by a keen and foresighted traveling man with whom he had come into accidental contact. The traveling man saw in him material of great promise at dollar-making, and he was not disappointed. The two of them got an agency for a patented line of tin silos, windmills, hog-troughs, back-scratchers, and other what-nots of field and farm—and became rich. Mr. Flood then, under a protective barrage and propaganda, hurled and disseminated by his bankers and business associates, penetrated our front lines, and now he was one of us. He was nicknamed, no doubt, owing to wartime influences, "The Big Offensive," and we had used every endeavor to rid ourselves of him except assassination.

"Mr. Flood will now horn in and take the floor," announced Mr. Hooper, winking prodigiously.

Unabashed, the silo king projected himself into the discussion.

"I've given this here liquor question a good deal of thought," he began, "and I think I have the solution to it. It's in our silo—our XX3. A farmer out in the country the other day showed me what it could do—under proper conditions. You just fill her up with the right kind of stuff, let her ferment for a couple of weeks, and then tap her about two foot from the ground. And say, boys, what you'll get out of her will knock your hat off! Now the club could put up one on the roof garden, and—"

The astounded Mr. Dumbeck rapped loudly with his gavel.

"Mr. Flood," he said, "you're out of order. This is a directors' meeting, and matters before it can be discussed by directors only."

Mr. Flood grinned, unembarrassed.

"I just thought I'd tell you what our XX3 could do," he said, lowering himself to his chair.

Seated, he continued to talk, under the impression, apparently, that in this position his remarks, though unofficial, were permissible; and he would have continued to talk till daylight had not the waiters arrived with the drinks.

This timely interruption was welcomed with shouts of joy, and the glad acclaim, taken by Mr. Flood as huzzas in his honor, spurred him to instruct the waiters to repeat the order.

It took some time before Doc Clark could be heard. He made several attempts—only to lose his temper and revile us in terms never before heard in the directors' room.

"What's the matter with Doc Clark?" yelled someone, and despite the fact that we yelled back, "*He's* all right," the Doctor shook his fist in our faces and more than intimated that anyone looking for trouble could get it.

We let him have the floor, finally, though only after Mr. Dumbeck had threatened to adjourn the meeting. It cannot be denied that we had all had too much to drink; but, on the other hand, this was no ordinary occasion.

"I've got," began the Doctor, "a friend down in Texas, and—"

"A *lady* friend, Doc?" inquired someone at the back of the room.

"*Who* said that?" the Doctor demanded, whirling about.

There was no response, and, after waiting a minute, the Doctor gave it as his opinion that he could whip the guilty person on less ground than he could stand on. Then he proceeded:

"I've got a friend down in Texas who was an aviator. He tells me that the Government has got a chair that can be spun around like a top—in any direction. They use this to test the boys

who want to fly. And he tells me that after you get spun around for five or ten minutes you get out just as drunk as a fool. Now the club could get one of these chairs—or a battery of 'em—fifteen or twenty, and—"

"You'll never spin *me* in any chair," interrupted Mr. Hooper belligerently. "Not if I *know* myself—and I think I do."

The Doctor glared at the iconoclast. "The expense per spin," he said cuttingly, "would be very small."

The arrival of the drinks ordered by Mr. Flood spared us the disgrace of fisticuffs. Indeed, it gave us much merriment, for Mr. Flood repudiated the whole transaction. So charge slips had to be made out for each drink—on which, however, we all signed Flood's name.

Discussion now became general and Mr. Dumbeck, after many vain attempts to enforce the rules and bylaws, folded his arms in resignation.

Mr. Webster clamored for recognition. It was decided, after a vote, that he should be heard on condition that he order a drink for the crowd. He capitulated and was given the floor.

"Out in Denver, where I was the other day," he said, "they've had a dry law for over a year. I was entertained at a certain club out there, and here's the way they get around it: Every member has got a little thingumajig in his vest pocket that looks like a fountain pen. It's full of alcohol. Now they just order any kind of a soft drink, give it a squirt out of the little thingumajig—and there you are, a drink with a kick to it."

Applause greeted the triumph of the "little thingumajig," there were inquiries as to where they could be had. Mr. Dumbeck alone shook his head.

"Clearly illegal," he said.

Mr. Henry Burke now stood on a chair and loudly proclaimed his intention of illuminating us as to a sure and certain way to circumvent the law. This, he pleaded, would take up but a moment of our time, and he went on, till hit in the ear with a piece of orange

rind, to picture our gratitude after he had divulged to us his great secret.

"We can do this," he shouted. "We can take a lot of near beer, pull the corks, put two raisins in each bottle, then put back the corks. Each member can have his own package of raisins, and the Club don't need to know anything about it. This looks to me like the only practical solution of the problem, and—"

Someone pulled the chair out from under Mr. Burke and the conclusion of his remarks became inaudible.

III

UNDAUNTED at the ignominy of Mr. Burke's retirement, Mr. Bill Duncan now took his place. He prefaced his remarks with a crisp phrase that made us all sit up and listen. He said: "To hell with the government!"

When the applause died down Mr. Duncan told us that every great crisis in the history of the nation had been met, denatured and flabbergasted by some humble citizen hitherto unknown to fame. The emergency never failed to produce the man. In this instance it had produced the Hon. James T. McWhirter, of Toledo, Ohio, by profession an automobile expert.

"Mr. McWhirter is a man of transcendent genius," he said. "And to him the world is indebted for that inspired creation, that child of his brain—McWhirter's Little Wonder Water Filter—"

Here the crowd yelled. It wanted nothing to do with water or water filters.

"But wait—listen," pleaded Mr. Duncan. "The Little Wonder is a filter all right, all right; and it's something else, too. Now listen, and keep what I tell you under your hat: You just screw off the top and load it up with a quart of hominy, rye, breakfast-food, birdseed, watermelon rinds or most anything, hold it over a gas jet a few minutes—and say, you've got a pint of white-eye that will make a jack rabbit spit in a bulldog's face."

Mr. Dumbeck roused himself.

"Enough of this!" he cried. "All these suggestions are evasions of the law, and the Club could not even consider them."

"Mr. Dumbeck is right," said Mr. Phil Martin, taking from his pocket a newspaper clipping. "I agree with him perfectly. Nothing has been suggested here tonight that wouldn't land us in jail. We've got to do this thing according to Hoyle. We've got to be careful." He put on his glasses and scanned the clipping. "Now here's a man we ought to get in touch with at once. This article tells of him putting up the stuff in solid form. And there's no alcohol in it. I don't know what's in it—the article doesn't state. But it does the work all right. Listen. It says: 'This substitute, the inventor states, can be put up in a number of ways. It can be made to resemble a beefsteak, a baked potato, or a salad, and can be flavored to taste like any kind of a highball, cocktail or wine.'"

"I'll not ruin *my* stomach loading up with fifteen or twenty rounds of beefsteak," declared Mr. Hooper.

"It only *looks* like beefsteak, as I understand it," explained Mr. Martin. "Once it gets inside it melts, something like an ice, and don't take up any room. You could eat 'em all night!"

"Not much *I* will," protested Mr. Hooper. "And, besides, if there's no spirits in it, what's the use?"

"It's got a kick all right," retorted Mr. Martin. "Listen what the article says: 'After partaking of one of these refreshments, in the form of a small link sausage, a one hundred and ten-pound lounge-lizard whipped two hack-drivers and three policemen, and—'"

"Enough of this foolishness!" roared Mr. Dumbeck. "I've listened to all I'm going to. Instead of a club you'd think this was an insane asylum!"

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" demanded Mr. Hooper angrily. "And what are *we* going to do about it? Submit tamely to the high-handed action of the infernal government? Not much! We'll form an

army, like Coxey did, and march to Washington and demand our rights, that's what we'll do! Then we'll see who's who, and what's what!" (Cheers and cries of "You've said something!" and "We'll show 'em!") "This here administration," continued Mr. Hooper, "is autocratic—it's despotic! It's like Russia was, and more so! And if the outraged people can put down a Czar in Russia, we can do the same here. I say—"

"And I'm with you!" came a clarion voice.

It belonged to Mr. Ferdinand Baker, hay and feed, and as its echoes broke along the ceiling Mr. Baker unrolled himself and took the floor. A certain unnatural fire was in his eyes; one might have argued, being unkind, that he was a bit liquored. In his right hand he grasped a tall highball glass, and as he went on he gesticulated with it wildly, distributing its small remaining contents over the room in the form of a fine spray.

"The time has come," he roared, "to strike for liberty. Liberty or death! Is it the duty of a good citizen to support the government and obey the laws? Yes! But *not* when the government is despotic, pusillanimous and corrupt. *Not* when the laws are such that they would make the Sultan of Turkey ashamed to look himself in the face. We have got to a point where something must be done. The time for talk is past. I am forty-eight years old, but I am not too old to fight. Say the word, and I'll get out my old fowling-piece and let 'er go. Who is with me? How many men here have got nerve enough to *fight* for liberty?"

Instantly, as if worked by invisible strings, two score leaped to their feet.

"Put me down!" yelled Mr. Charles Fletcher, builders' hardware. "Put me down, Baker—me and my squirrel rifle!"

Enormous applause greeted the volunteer, and there was a rush to join him. All yelled together, and their enthusiasm, spreading like a contagion, even reached such sedate ancients as old

Mr. Henderson, the club valetudinarian. Captain Howard offered to command the club battalion in the field. Mr. Hooper offered to pay for two hundred bayonets. Mr. Flood, the silo king, demanded that a committee be appointed at once to arrange for artillery. Even old Mr. McNabb, forgetting his chronic discontent for once, leaped to his feet and promised to work sixteen hours a day in the club munitions factory. Presently the voice of Mr. Duncan was heard again.

"What I say," he bellowed, "is simple: To hell with the government. If this is the United States, then damn the United States! All I ask is a chance to escape. Lead me to Liberia or Nicaragua, and let me get naturalized! George Washington died in vain. The country has gone to pot."

"Teetotally gone to hell!" cried Mr. Flood. "Altogether busted and ruined. Who wants to be an American citizen today? Nobody! Why, the very wops are rushing home—they can't get enough ships to haul them—ten thousand leave New York every day. What I say is, let's put it out of its misery. If it's Civil War they want, then let us give them Civil War! Put me down for two tanks and an airship. Send me the bill!"

"Damn the government!" bawled Mr. Fletcher.

"Damn the government!" echoed three score members, and then, the waiters arriving with another round, all fought for their glasses, raised them aloft and pledged themselves in the most awful toast ever heard in our aged and eminently respectable club.

IV

DURING the few seconds of silence while glasses slowly tilted, Mr. Dumbek got to his feet. His face was white, his fists were clenched and hot fires sparked from his eyes. His glare traversed the gathering.

Then he slowly spoke.

"What I have heard here," he began, "is outrageous, scandalous, incredible.

Am I in a decent club in this great free country, or am I in a crowd of scoundrelly Bolsheviki?"

He fixed Mr. Baker with his vivid eye, and then Captain Howard. "I hear sedition preached here," he went on. "I hear *treason*. Yes, *treason*! If I went to the Federal authorities and told them what has been said here tonight, you'd all be in jail in the morning, with twenty years in Leavenworth ahead of you. Men have been hanged for less. I am shocked and astounded. I can't believe my ears. I believe you are all *drunk*!"

Silence followed the remarks of Mr. Dumbeck.

There was an uneasy shifting in chairs. Glasses were put down.

Captain Hooper was the first to find his voice.

"I yield to no man," he began, "in—"

But Mr. Dumbeck cut him off.

"Yes, I must assume that you are all drunk," he said. "No other theory is imaginable. It would be too much for me; I couldn't bear it. You are drunk, and not responsible for your acts. What remains for you is to make expiation. You must show that you regret your—your unfortunate insanity. Words said here tonight must be wiped out. We must try to forget them. The members of the club will now rise."

Docilely and much abashed, the crowd came to its feet—somewhat wobbly, but still unanimously.

"We will now," pursued Mr. Dumbeck, "sing the national anthem, 'The Star-Spangled Banner.' Those who don't know the words will hum."

There was a painful pause, and then Captain Hooper struck up the words. His voice turned out to be a high tenor, and he had got half way through the first stanza before anyone joined him. Then old Mr. McNabb horned in with a rumbling bass. Then Mr. Flood was heard. Then Mr. Baker. Then a dozen other members tried it, some attempting the words, but most of them content with the famous "da te da." The first stanza ended horribly, and Captain Hooper started on the second.

"Enough," said Mr. Dumbeck authoritatively. "You are too drunk to sing. You will now kiss the flag."

Whereupon he drew from his inside coat pocket a small flag in the form of a handkerchief, and solemnly laid it on the table.

"You first," he said, and turned his evil eye upon Captain Hooper. "You are a military man."

The Captain hesitated. He didn't know whether to lift the flag to his lips or to stoop to it as it lay on the table.

"Stoop," said Mr. Dumbeck.

The Captain stooped. After him Mr. Flood stooped. Then Mr. Baker. Old McNabb, stooping next, broke into sobs. Mr. Duncan, following him, sobbed, too. One by one they stooped and kissed the flag. One by one they purged themselves of their infamy. As the last penitent passed him, Mr. Dumbeck spoke again.

"The meeting," he said, "is adjourned. The petition is laid on the table."



WHEN you tell a man that you understand him thoroughly, he becomes interested. Tell a woman the same thing and she becomes suspicious.



FEAR

By Helen Drake

SHE aged through fear.

* * * * *

When a burglar flashed his light in her face she said: "All of my jewels are in a vault. You had better depart before the servants hear you."

When they warned her that the canoe was unsafe in the gale, she told them that she could swim a mile without tiring.

When a poisonous snake coiled at her feet she said: "How beautiful. It is the colour of my emerald necklace."

When a mad dog pursued her, she climbed up a tree like a small boy, laughing.

* * * * *

She aged through fear of old age.



LIFE IS A CHAMELEON

By John McClure

TELL me not how loveliness
Brightens and flies:
Life is a chameleon
Of all changing dyes.

Beauty, beauty perishes.
Loveliness must pass.
Even so: yet life is still
Lovely as it was.

Beauty begets beauty
Though all beauty fades:
Life is a chameleon
Of all changing shades.



THE REBELLION

By L. M. Hussey

I

THE door bell rang just as Proctor sat down to the breakfast table.

At that moment his wife was in the kitchen, frying his eggs anxiously, for he was a particular man and if she brought them in to him the bottoms tough he would unquestionably bellow at her a denunciation that would linger in her mind all the rest of the day.

At the sound of the bell he sprang up in irritation.

"Who the devil is that?" he muttered

With his habitually ape-like posture, a slight, sullen stoop, his long arms dangling at his sides, he strode out of the room toward the front door.

His wife heard the door open and then the sound of a man's voice, speaking to him.

A second later, quite suddenly, she heard her husband swear. She bit her lips slightly and the troubled lines in her forehead deepened a little.

Already she felt distinct animosity to the unknown person who had rung their bell. Whoever he was, he had accomplished the all too easy business of arousing. Proctor's anger; that would inevitably react upon her own precarious peace.

She regretted now that she had not risked the final condition of the eggs, and hurried to the door herself.

The voices continued in energetic conversation for several further minutes, whereupon her dishes on the kitchen table vibrated at a vicious slamming-shut of the door.

Proctor came thumping through the short hall, crossed the dining-room with a loud tread, and entered the kitchen.

She turned her troubled face to him as he came in.

She could see at once that no trivial irritation had upset him.

His brows were contracted until scarcely more of his eyes than the thick, red-rimmed lids were visible. His lips were drawn up into a snarl that bared an uneven line of nicotine-stained teeth. The stubble of his unshaken face, a mixture of black and grey, seemed to stand up ferociously like the fur of an angry animal. She saw that his fists were clenched, that his arms were drawn up in an angular menace. He spoke to her hoarsely, as if his anger rose up like a palpable obstruction in his throat, hindering his utterance.

"Well, old woman!" he exclaimed, "I suppose you'll be proud of that brat now! I suppose you'll give me some more excuses for him. I suppose you'll tell me that he couldn't help it, that he's so young, that I ought to be easier with him! Well, it isn't up to me to be easy with him now, by God! He's where he'll get all that's coming to him."

He stopped, glaring at her, and a certain obscure expression mingling with the snarling brutality of his features, gave him the look of one who had just achieved some sort of a low triumph, the expression of savage satisfaction at the degradation of an opponent powerless to strike back.

His wife raised her hands in a familiar gesture, clutching her dress beneath her throat with both hands. She knew that he was speaking of their son; she understood that something had happened.

"What is it?" she whispered painfully.

"What is it?" he yelled. "What is it? Why it's enough, that's what it is! He's done now, and I'm damn glad of it, come to think. No more lounging lommax around this house, that won't work, that's got an old woman to take his part."

He paused to grimace at her malevolently.

"Tell me," she pleaded.

"Why, he's locked up, he's behind the bars, that's what's happened! A fine son! A pride to a man's name! A nice thing for an honest man to have to face! Thy juggled him last night, trying to break into a house. I'm not surprised that that was the game he was up to, and nobody can say that I'm surprised he got caught! He's such a cheap no-account that he don't even make a good burglar!"

Whilst he expanded on the circumstance his wife continued to stare at him, still clutching her dress with both hands in that immobile gesture of despair.

His denunciations, his crude irony, his reflections on herself vibrated in the room in a bellow of cacophonous words. But her mind no longer attended his sentences, her faculties refused the understanding of his further utterance. She was thinking of the catastrophe.

She was seeing, in a bitter moment of complete defeat, the failure of her maternal struggle. Since the earliest days she had fought for her boy, blindly and ineffectually, without an understanding of the forces opposing her, against a vicious environment and a no less vicious heredity.

In the simplicity of her ideas, but with a fervour of desire that was indeed a passion, she had endeavoured to make him honest and respectable. Moreover, she had very clear ideas of what constituted these two desirable estates; she never entertained any philosophic doubts; words were labels, with a strict meaning to her. And she knew that she had failed.

In this instant of revelation, in this knowledge of utterly devastated hopes, she was not only superior to the taunts

of her husband, but even oblivious to them. He was raging; she did not hear him. The only impression he gave her then was one of meaningless noise. She saw him waving his arms vaguely; her ears recorded the remote sounds of his stamping up and down the kitchen floor. Probably she knew also that he was heaping blame upon her, unreasonable accusations. That was nothing. She was accustomed to his injustice.

Feeling an angry pleasure in this opportunity of denunciation and enjoying to a certain measure the mere sound of his own vociferous words, Proctor was for a time unaware that she did not attend him.

But pausing finally for a deep breath, he stared at her and observed the abstraction of her blanched face. His ire took a fresh track.

"Well?" he snarled.

She did not answer him. He was certain now that she did not even hear, that she had not heard, that she paid no attention to his words.

His face reddened; he clenched his fists; he advanced on her ominously.

She became conscious of the practical necessities of the moment when she found his crimson face lowered and thrust close to her own and felt his breath blowing out in intermittent puffs against her lips.

She shrank back and raised her fending hands involuntarily.

She knew what was coming and save for this ineffectual gesture of defense she made him no resistance.

His hands closed over her shoulders; his fingers sunk into her meagre and painful flesh. He began to shake her. For several seconds, with the forced agitation of her trembling body, she felt that she would come apart, that he would shake her arms from her shoulders, her head from her body.

She held her breath in terror.

Then his huge hand was clapped against the side of her face and with a swinging motion of his arm he whirled her away from him. She staggered back against the table; it tilted toward the spotted wall and the plate with his

eggs clattered and splintered on the floor.

"There goes my breakfast!" he howled.

For an instant, glimpsing his threatening face, his bloodshot eyes, his doubled, upraised fists, she expected him to renew the chastisement, under the provocation of this fresh disaster.

For a moment he hesitated and she shrunk against the table, fearful again, in her customary attitude of ineffectual defence. But perhaps any physical impression seemed inadequate to Proctor. He glared for a few seconds more, and then, muttering threats, he stamped out of the room.

She heard him pass through the dining-room. He paused in the hall to take his hat down from the rack; the front door slammed violently; he was gone.

II

MECHANICALLY she began to take up the débris from the floor. Her shoulder-blades stood out sharply as she stooped to her task, like palpable symbols of her harsh days. On the side of her face a red smear, like a sinister blush, marked the place where Proctor's hand had struck her.

Presently she stood up. Without finishing the work in hand, she leaned heavily against the table, her arms flaccid at her sides. An inner consciousness of the futility of any work, acutely felt, but unsensed in definite words, put a stop to her activities. Her inert posture, her attitude of hopeless immobility, was maintained for several minutes. She looked down at the floor; she scarcely seemed to breathe.

But a torturing picture came to her mind.

She saw her son in confinement, in the dark quarters of a cell that caged not only his body, but all her hopes. What other hope had she ever held but the one in him? Dreams for herself, affection, consideration, love—even hours of calm and placidity—had long been buried and forgotten. They had

passed, they had gone, they had worn away in the bitter attrition of the formidable years. Her memory never recalled another state than her present one. If ever she had been young, with the visions of early years, she had forgotten.

But the necessity for some sort of hope, in the abandonment of any purely personal aspiration, had made her concentrate her desires on her boy. Perhaps she could save *him*!

And now she had failed, utterly.

Yet this did not affect her dumb loyalty, a loyalty that was almost stupid and animal in its unswerving quality. She felt now that she must go to him, see him if she could, let him hear her loving voice amongst all the hostile and indifferent speech that addressed his ears. She straightened her body a little and began to walk across the kitchen toward the door.

She went straight on to the stairs in the hall. Going up, she turned into the small disordered room that she occupied with Proctor. The bed was not yet made; the sheets were rolled up in an amorphous confusion. A pair of Proctor's old shoes, caked with mud around the edges, lay out in the center of the floor. His nightshirt was tossed over a chair.

She gave no attention to these things. She went over to the closet and took out an old hat, with a wide, floppy brim, that she pinned to her head, careless of her appearance. She put on a long, ill-fitting coat, stained from much usage. Then she left the room.

When she reached the street, it presented its customary morning aspect. Dirty children were running about, screaming, yelling, calling to each other. Women were standing in their doorways conversing in loud voices. Others, on the sidewalk, leaping on their brooms, carried on their conversations there.

The news of her trouble had already spread among them. They stared at her mercilessly as she emerged, as she walked up the street. They nodded to her when she passed and several tried

to stop her in order that they might gratify themselves with some version from her own lips. But she went on without pausing.

At the corner she took the car and rode uptown. She imagined that the boy was still confined in the central police station. Doubtless he had already been given a hearing and would be held there for court. She knew, unluckily, that his offence was serious enough for that.

She sat in the car, shrinking against the opened window, staring out at the street, but with eyes that were oblivious to the sights of the streets. The spring day was warm, yet even with her coat on she felt chilled and occasionally her hands trembled with a nervous cold. No one noticed her; no one paid her any attention. Like most human beings, she was isolated in her unhappiness.

The car passed out of the district of shabby streets and came into a more presentable quarter.

Finally, knowing her street more by feeling than by direct sight, she got up and left the car. It passed her; several automobiles followed and, watching her chance, she ran across the street.

Two blocks away the city hall was before her in the formidable pile of stone, its clumsy tower standing up in the sunlight, like the grotesque stump of some gaunt and monstrous tree, denuded of all brightness. She walked toward this building, trembling and hurried.

She passed into the court and entered one of the long, badly lighted corridors.

Now her steps became less hurried; the rush of people bewildered her, the many offices, the lounging men, the mumble of innumerable conversations. A fat policeman was standing near the row of elevators. She approached him hesitantly.

As she paused in front of him, he looked down at her stolidly.

"I want to know where I can find my boy," she said.

Her small voice, trembling a little, seemed very inadequate in the caver-

nous corridor into which it issued.

"Who is he?" asked the policeman.

"He was taken up last night," she murmured. "He's in . . . in jail . . ."

There was no change in the expression of the man's face. His stolidity seemed incapable of surprise, incapable of any emotion.

"Well," he said, "you can go up to the fifth floor and ask about him at the night-court office. I don't think it'll do you much good, though."

She still hesitated; she twisted her fingers together; she retained her position before the bulky immobility of the policeman.

"I suppose you'd like to see him?" he asked.

"Yes," she murmured.

"Well, it won't do you much good then. These ain't the hours. You'll have to come around five. Unless you've got permission."

A man approached him and asked some question that she did not attend.

She drew away a few paces, puzzled, uncertain.

New emotions came to her, curious emotions of so strange a complexity that she was not wholly able to define their character. She felt tired, she felt hopeless, she felt useless and above all she experienced a disturbing and an enervating sense of foreboding.

It seemed as if the path of her life had in some way, in that very moment, accomplished a division and that she would tread henceforth through an unknown way. Her feeling of this amounted almost to a conviction. Yet she saw no promise nor any hope before her.

At last she began to walk slowly through the corridor, back the way she had come. Somehow it seemed useless to see her boy; in a way, she no longer wanted to see him. He had passed beyond her. Nevertheless, to resign him in this way shocked her and in walking the length of the corridor she struggled with herself, endeavouring to retard her retreating steps, telling herself that she was disloyal, that she owed him another trial, that she should at least decide defi-

nately on coming back later in the day. Yet her mind would not even allow the compromise of this decision. She did not believe she would come back.

She returned to the street and walked slowly through the crowds, her eyes cast down, her inert arms keeping scarcely any rhythm with her steps. Some uncomprehended necessity for the passage of a certain few hours made her walk idly, without a goal, without a purpose.

Sometimes she paused and stared into the store windows, but she saw none of the goods on display. She was excessively puzzled, and the sense of foreboding, like an inscrutable shadow, lay darkly over her spirits.

After a time she became aware that the morning had gone; it was already afternoon. She thought it necessary to return home. What was there to go to? She did not know. She had not thought of Proctor, nor of the accustomed routine of her days. Yet she took the car and rode back again, coming finally to the mean street she had left early in the morning.

As she approached her house one of her neighbors appeared at a door and beckoned to her. For an instant she thought of ignoring the woman; surely there was nothing she cared to hear. But again, she had nothing to do, no plans; it was as well to stop as to go on.

"Mrs. Proctor!" the woman called.

A look of stolid inquiry came into her thin face.

"Well?"

"I thought I'd better tell you; it's a shame, that's what I say. Now when you have so much trouble. Your Mister came home more than an hour ago; he's dead drunk. He was out here on the street disgracing the neighborhood, calling for you and swearing terribly; my ears burnt; it's a shame that all these decent children have to hear such things as that man said! I think it's awful that he couldn't keep straight when you have so much trouble. . . ."

The woman watched the face of the wife, eager to observe any emotional response. Her eyes glistened lewdly;

she hoped for some revealing words.

But Mrs. Proctor's face showed no change.

"He's in the house now?" she asked.

"No—he went away again, cursing and swearing dreadfully. I thought I'd better tell you. He's liable to come back any time and give you an awful lot of trouble. Oh, Mrs. Proctor, believe me, I sympathize with you. I could never stand such carryings on!"

Somehow she did not care, and it was no surprise to her that Proctor had taken such a course. He was drunk once a week anyway, and then he always beat her. No doubt he would return and beat her today. She was indifferent; she was even without her customary fear.

Saying nothing, she resumed her slow pace.

Ascending her steps, she went into the house and the eyes of eager, watching women saw the door close upon her.

III

SHE walked out to the dining-room and sat down. Proctor's plate was still on the table; the cloth was sprinkled with bread-crumbs; it was just as he had left it on abandoning his breakfast. It did not occur to her that it was necessary to remove these things.

She remained seated near the table for some time. She took no note of the hours and so far as she knew she might have been there any length of time. Finally she stood up and began to wander through the house.

Going upstairs, she looked into each of the shabby rooms but touched nothing, did no work upon their disorder. Every now and then she went to the front window and stared out at the street. At last she sat down again and once more she was immobile for an indefinite period.

With a sudden alarm, her senses recorded the fact that it was growing dusk. She thought of Proctor. Any moment he would be home now! Something of her old fear entered her flesh again and her body contracted in a

slight, involuntary shrinking. There was no supper ready for him; there was nothing prepared. She saw his fury very clearly, his brutal, drunken rage. And she did not feel adequate to facing it.

Standing up very swiftly she walked toward the door. Her idea was to go out again and so, for a time at least, escape him.

Thinking for a moment that she must put on a hat, she raised her hands to her head and was surprised to discover that her hat was still in place; it had never been removed.

She came out into the hall and walked down the stairs in a renewed haste. She hurried through the front door.

It seemed that someone spoke to her on the street, but she did not pause to answer.

She went on swiftly and as she walked she pressed her arms against her sides in order that her long coat might come more closely about her; unaccountably she felt cold. And in her heart there was once more that curious emotion of uncomprehending foreboding.

It was growing quite dark. The arcs on the street corners flared into being, like great, cold, unsteady eyes. Before her she saw the shaded place of a public square. Very tired, she turned in and found a bench.

It was dark in the spot where she rested; a huge tree threw an obscuring shadow over her. Perhaps she had been sitting there a half hour when a man, strolling along the path, observed her and sat down on the other end of her bench.

He could not see her face; he could not distinctly apprehend the outlines of her figure. Her wide hat made a denser shadow over her neck and shoulders. The dim light deceived him. He edged a little toward her and coughed.

She heard the invitation of his cough and felt his movement along the bench. At once her mind, freed from all its pre-occupations, was filled with an intense surprise. A man was trying to flirt with her! It was incredible! How,

seeing her worn face, her tired body, her shabby clothes, could he think of such a thing?

Then she understood. He did not see her. It was dark on the bench and the fellow had made a mistake. The darkness confused him, the gloom concealed her pitiful estate. And she felt her cheeks grow warm.

Now, out of the mists, out of long-forgotten memories, memories that had seemed buried in the despair of years, certain recollections from other and more gracious moments returned to her. She remembered her youth! Once she had been a girl; once men had smiled at her, loved her, wanted her, desired her! Perhaps she had been pretty—yes, even that was possible.

"Good evening . . ."

He was speaking to her. . . . She stood up suddenly.

She began to walk away almost in panic, half running. Suppose he should see her; suppose he should discover his mistake! In that moment, to have him come close to her side, to have him peer under her hat and see the face that time had given her, see the countenance without youth, the lips that had forgotten kisses, the eyes that held no further light of hope, would be of all things the ultimate catastrophe. She was afraid that he was following her. Her heart beat fast under her dress.

She came out of the park, but she did not slacken her pace. It seemed to her then that others might make the same mistake, and coming close to her, be the witnesses of her shame. She walked with her head bent low, that none might have any glimpse of her face.

She turned into her own street, and hurrying still, reached her home. It was with no thought of Proctor that she opened the front door; she was relieved when it closed behind her and leaning against the smudged tiles in the vestibule she breathed rapidly, in relief, in a sense of freedom, as if she had escaped a real danger.

And then she heard a muttering voice in the dining-room.

It was Proctor. He called to her

and his tones were guttural. In her imagination she saw his thickened lips as the words passed over them, his crimson face, his drooping lids, his slouching, unsteady body. As if his words held a spell, she advanced through the hall to meet him.

As she approached the dining-room door she was aware of a rare lack in the feelings that possessed her in those seconds. For an instant she was puzzled and then she knew: she was without fear!

Something had taken the place of fear, a new emotion, heady and impetuous.

She passed through the door and found him leaning over one of the chairs, glaring at her.

The capillaries of his eyes were expanded, tracing a net-work of red lines over the glistening whites. His hands gripping the chair back, were red and enormous. When his eyes accomplished an unsteady focus upon her, his upper lip was slowly raised, exposing the stained line of his teeth, a snarling grimace that carried a threat. His hands dropped from the back of the chair and circling it slowly he advanced toward her.

She knew what he intended. Each time that he was drunk, he beat her.

But now she did not cringe, her hands did not rise up into that pitiful and ineffectual gesture of defense. The abounding anger that had risen in her as she passed through the hall, even at the first sound of his thick voice, was understood in this instant, and with it came an assurance of immeasurable strength.

She saw him drawing near, but she perceived more than his mere physical brutality. In a larger sense he approached her now as a symbol, as a personification, as an embodiment of her disaster. He was her fate, the fate that had opposed her dreams, reft her youth from her, changed her face, withered her body, trampled into nothingness the fragile figures of her hopes. And she was mad with rage.

Another chair was standing against the wall, near the door. She saw him very close now, she saw his outstretched hands. So swiftly that he had no time to fend the blow, she raised the chair in her hands and hurled it down upon his head. His whole body flexed with the impact; he seemed to crumple like a figure made of soft metal. Her heart leaped with a fierce beat of joy as she saw the momentary astonishment that came over his crimson face. She did not loosen her grip upon the chair but raising it again struck once more. He fell like a tottering dummy.

She leaned over him, panting desperately. She beat his body again and again. For a few seconds he howled in a voice of horror and she mingled screams of her own with his yells. The rungs of the chair splintered; the seat broke off from the back in her hands.

The room was suddenly quiet now; he had ceased to cry out. She heard only an intermittent gasping sound that she recognized, with some surprise, as her own breathing.

There was a noise at the front door and she perceived hurried footsteps coming through the hall.

Bending over Proctor, she looked down at him. He was motionless, helpless, and somehow pitiful. A wave of regret passed through her body like the chill of an iced wind. Vaguely she seemed to understand that she had been wrong; this man had not been the fate that accomplished her degradation, but only the helpless instrument of her misfortunes. And suddenly, with an anguish of soul, she saw that he must once have been young, too, and perhaps also had had hopes!

She turned sharply toward the door. Men's faces, her neighbors, were peering in with wide eyes.

A policeman pushed through the little group. He approached Proctor and bent over him. He saw at once that there was no life in that disfigured body. Rising, he turned his eyes upon the woman with a look of intense sternness. She understood and the frag-

ment of the chair dropped out of her limp hands.

* * * *

The house-sergeant at the police-station was talking to a newspaper reporter.

"Yes, you're right," he said. "A bad

family. All of them criminals. The son's in for burglary and the mother has made a confession. Perhaps the old man was the only decent one of the lot. As far as I can learn, he did nothing worse than get drunk occasionally. Usually he worked steady enough every day."



TOMORROW AND TOMORROW

By Hazel Knox Bornschein

MY heart is like a house of many rooms
With windows open wide, the shades undrawn,
And many-colored birds, in cages, singing,
And flowers and vines, in wicker baskets, swinging.

But there's one room apart from all the rest
Where all the birds are still, the flowers dead.
The shades are drawn; the floor is thick with dust;
It smells of mould and mildew and of must.

When I have entered it, I bolt the door
And grope my way among the wan, white wraiths
Until I reach that which I would forget,
The death-cold living Thing that I regret.

I bow my head upon the Thing and weep,
And wish that I might never more come back
To smell the mould and feel the pulsing pain.
And yet tomorrow and tomorrow I must come again.



A PRETTY woman loses her charm the moment she falls desperately in love with her husband.



WHEN a man sees a woman staring at him, he averts his eyes to survey her ankles.

RÉPÉTITION GÉNÉRALE

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

The American Credo, IV.—Additional leading doctrines and theories of the American Credo:

1. That, in small town hotels, the tap marked "hot water" always gives forth cold water and that the tap marked "cold" always gives forth hot.

2. That every lieutenant in the American army who went to France had an affair with a French comtesse.

3. That, being surrounded by alcoholic beverages and believing the temptation would be irresistible once he began, a bartender never drinks.

4. That all millionaires are born in small ramshackle houses situated near railroad tracks.

5. That farmers afford particularly easy prey for book-agents and are the largest purchasers of cheap sets of Guy de Maupassant, Rudyard Kipling and O. Henry.

6. That French women use great quantities of perfume in lieu of taking a bath.

7. That a six-footer is invariably a virtuoso of amour superior to a man of, say, five feet seven.

8. That a soubrette is always fifteen or twenty years older than she looks.

9. That in Japan an American can buy a beautiful geisha for two dollars and that, upon being bought, she will promptly fall madly in love with him and will run his house for him in a scrupulously clean manner.

10. That when cousins marry, their children are born blind, deformed, or imbecile.

11. That a cat falling from the twentieth story of the Singer Building will

land upon the pavement below uninjured, and as frisky as ever.

12. That all the wine served in Italian restaurants is made in the cellar, and is artificially coloured with some sort of dye that is very harmful to the stomach.

13. That bootblacks whistle because they are so happy.

14. That stokers on ocean liners are from long service so used to the heat of the furnaces that they don't notice it.

15. That what draws men to horse races is love of the sport.

16. That new Bermuda potatoes come from Bermuda.

17. That the boy who regularly stands at the foot of his class in school always turns out in later life to be very successful.

18. That the ornamental daggers fashioned out of one hundred dollars' worth of Chinese coins strung together, which one buys in Pekin or Hong Kong for three dollars and a quarter, are fashioned out of one hundred dollars' worth of Chinese coins.

19. That one may always successfully get a cinder out of the eye by not touching the eye, but rolling it in an outward direction and simultaneously blowing the nose.

20. That if one wears light weight underwear winter and summer the year 'round, one will never catch a cold.

21. That a drunken man is invariably more bellicose than a sober man.

22. That what impels most men to have their finger-nails manicured is a vanity for having manicured finger-nails.

23. That water rots the hair and thus causes baldness.

24. That when one twin dies, the

other twin becomes exceedingly melancholy and soon also dies.

25. That chorus girls spend the time during the entr'actes sitting around naked in their dressing-rooms telling naughty stories.

26. That many soldiers' lives have been saved in battle by bullets lodging in Bibles which they have carried in their breast pockets.

27. That each year the Fourth of July exodus to the bathing beaches on the part of persons from the city establishes a new record.

28. That women with red hair or wide nostrils are possessed of especially passionate natures.

29. That fully one-half the repertoire of physical ailments is due to uric acid.

30. That nature designed a horse's tail primarily as a flicker-off of flies.

31. That nicotine keeps the teeth in a sound condition.

32. That when an Odd Fellow dies he is always given a magnificent funeral by his lodge, including a band and a parade.

33. That the man who is elected president of the Senior Class in a college is always the most popular man in his class.

34. That a minor actress in a theatrical company always considers the leading man a superb creature, and loves him at a distance.

35. That a Southern levee is a gay place.

36. That every man who calls himself Redmond is a Jew whose real name is Rosenberg.

37. That General Grant never directed a battle save with a cigar in his mouth.

38. That there is something slightly peculiar about a man who wears spats.

39. That the more modest a young girl is, the more innocent she is.

40. That what a woman admires above everything else in a man is an upright character.

41. That seafaring men drink nothing but rum.

42. That no family in the slums has less than six children.

43. That all idols have large precious rubies in their foreheads.

44. That when the foe beheld Joan of Arc leading the French army against them, a look of terror froze their features and that, casting their arms from them, they broke into a frenzied and precipitate flight.

45. That the late King Edward VII as Prince of Wales easily got every girl he wanted.

46. That the penitentiaries of the United States contain a great number of hapless prisoners possessed of a genuine gift for poetry.

47. That a piece of camphor worn on a string around the neck will ward off disease.

48. That a saloon with a sign reading "Family Entrance" on its side door invariably runs a bawdy house upstairs.

49. That the wife of a rich man always wistfully looks back into the past and wishes she had married a poor man.

50. That all persons prominent in smart society are very dull.

51. That when ordering a drink of whiskey at a bar, a man instructs the bartender as to the size of the drink he desires by saying "two fingers" or "three fingers."

52. That when a dog whines in the middle of the night, it is a sure sign that someone is going to die.

53. That the stenographer in a business house is always coveted by her employer, who invites her to luncheon frequently, gradually worms his way into her confidence, keeps her after office hours one day, accomplishes her ruin, and then sets her up in a magnificently furnished apartment in Riverside Drive and appeases her old mother by paying the latter's expenses for a summer holiday with her daughter at the seashore.

54. That the extinction of the Indian has been a deplorable thing.

55. That everybody has a stomach-ache after Thanksgiving dinner.

56. That, in summer, tan shoes are much cooler on the feet than black shoes.

57. That an elevator operator never succeeds in stopping his car on a level with the floor.

58. That all the women who go in bathing at Ostend and Trouville wear one-piece bathing suits.

59. That a man who habitually clears his throat before he speaks is generally a self-important hypocrite and a bluffer.

60. That Maurice Maeterlinck leads a monastic life.

61. That all men from the Argentine are excellent tango dancers.

62. That the work of a detective calls for exceptionally high sagacity and cunning.

63. That on the first day of the season in the pleasure parks many persons, owing to insufficiently tested apparatus, are regularly killed on the roller-coasters.

64. That a play, a novel, or a short story with a happy ending is necessarily a commercialized and inartistic piece of work.

65. That a person who follows up a cucumber salad with a dish of ice-cream will inevitably be the victim of cholera morbus.

66. That the cashier of a restaurant in adding up a customer's cheque always adds a dollar which is subsequently split between himself and the waiter.

67. That it is impossible to pronounce the word "statistics" without stuttering.

68. That the profession of white slavery, in 1900 controlled exclusively by Chinamen, has since passed entirely under the control of Italians.

69. That every person in the Riviera lives in a "villa."

70. That the chief form of headgear among the Swiss is the Alpine hat.

71. That each year a man volunteers to take his children to the circus merely as a subterfuge to go himself.

72. That all marriages with actresses turn out badly.

73. That Robert W. Chambers writes his novels with his tongue in his cheek; and that he could do very much finer work if only he had a mind to.

74. That the reason William Gillette, who has been acting for over forty years, always smokes cigars in the parts he plays is because he is very nervous when on the stage.

75. That the doughnut is an exceptionally indigestible article.

76. That one captive balloon in every two containing persons on pleasure bent breaks away from its moorings, and drifts out to sea.

77. That a working man always eats what is in his dinner-pail with great relish.

78. That children were much better behaved twenty years ago than they are today.

79. That all stockbrokers are vulgar-ians.

80. That every time one sat upon an old-fashioned horse-hair sofa one of the protruding sharp hairs would stab one through the union suit.

81. That when an ocean vessel collides with another vessel or hits an iceberg and starts to sink, the ship's band promptly rushes up to the top deck and begins playing "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

82. That in no town in America where it has played has "Uncle Tom's Cabin" ever failed to make money.

83. That the tenement districts are the unhealthy places they are because the dwellers hang their bed-clothing out on the fire-escapes.

84. That every time one blows oneself to a particularly expensive cigar and leans back to enjoy oneself with a good smoke after a hearty and satisfying dinner, the cigar proceeds to burn down the side.

85. That when a police captain goes on a holiday he always gets boilingly drunk.

86. That an Italian puts garlic in everything he eats, including coffee.

87. That if one hits a negro on the head with a cobblestone, the cobblestone will break.

88. That all nuns have entered convents because of unfortunate love affairs.

89. That a street-car conductor steals every fifth nickel.

90. That the security of a bank is to be estimated in proportion to the solidity of the bank building.

91. That seventy-five per cent of all taxicab drivers have at one time or another been in Sing Sing.

92. That one can buy a fine suit of clothes in London for twelve dollars.

93. That the chicken salad served in restaurants is always made of veal.

94. That the real President of the United States is J. P. Morgan.

95. That onion breath may be promptly removed by drinking a little milk.

96. That onion breath may be promptly removed by eating a little parsley.

97. That Catholic priests conduct their private conversations in Latin.

98. That John Drew is a great society man.

99. That all Swedes are stupid fellows, and have very thick skulls.

100. That all the posthumously printed stories of David Graham Phillips and Jack London have been written by hacks hired by the magazine editors and publishers.

(To be continued)

§ 2

Tempo di Valse.—Those Puritans who snort against the modern dances are quite right when they argue that the tango and the shimie are violently aphrodisiacal, but what they overlook is the fact that the abolition of such banal wriggles would probably revive something worse, to wit, the Viennese waltz. The waltz never quite goes out of fashion; it is always just around the corner; every now and then it comes back with a bang. And to the sore harassment and corruption, I suspect, of chemical purity, the ideal of all right-thinkers.

The shimie and the tango are too gross to be very dangerous; they sug-

gest drinking beer out of buckets; the most elemental good taste is proof enough against them. But the waltz! Ah, the waltz, indeed! It is sneaking, insidious, disarming, lovely. It does its work, not like a college-yell or an explosion in a munitions plant, but like the rustle of the trees, the murmur of the illimitable sea, the sweet gurgle of a pretty girl. The jazz band fetches only vulgarians, barbarians, idiots, pigs. But there is a mystical something in "Wiener Blut" or "Künstler Leben" that fetches even philosophers.

The waltz, in fact, is magnificently obscene—the art of tone turned bawdy. I venture to say that the compositions of one man alone, Johann Strauss II, have lured more fair young creatures to lamentable complaisance than all the hypodermic syringes of all the white slave scouts since the fall of the Western Empire. There is something about a waltz that is simply irresistible. Try it on the fattest and sedatest or even on the thinnest and most acidulous of women, and she will be ready, in ten minutes, for a stealthy kiss behind the door—nay, she will forthwith impart the embarrassing news that her husband misunderstands her, and drinks too much, and cannot appreciate Maeterlinck, and is going to Cleveland, O., on business tomorrow. . . .

I often wonder that the Comstocks have not undertaken a crusade against the waltz. If they try to suppress "The 'Genius'" and "Madame Bovary," then why do they overlook "Rosen aus dem Süden"? If they are so hot against the Decameron, then why the immunity of "Wein, Weib und Gesang"? . . . I throw out the suggestion and pass on. Nearly all the great waltzes of the world, incidentally, were written by Germans—or Austrians. A waltz-pogrom would thus enlist the professional patriots, social pushers and other such idealists. Moreover, there is the Public Health Service; it is already engaged upon a campaign to enforce purity by statute and artillery. Imagine such an enterprise with every band free to play "Wiener Madl"!

§ 3

Procyon Americanus.—The United States divides itself into two parts. In the one part they shoot darkeys; in the other part they kiss them. What is lacking is a part in which the poor coon may go about his business without attracting any attention at all.

§ 4

Middle-Age.—The Appomattox of superlatives.

§ 5

The Russian and the American Dramatist.—The Russian dramatist is one who, walking through a cemetery, does not see the flowers on the graves. The American dramatist is one who, walking through a cemetery, does not see the graves under the flowers.

§ 6

There is Yet Hope!—When Captain John Smith and his gay bucks landed at Jamestown in 1607 they found the fields bare, the game scarce and the fish in the rivers coy, and so they were presently on the reduced diet of poets and philosophers, and bearing it very badly. In this emergency they searched the woods and swamps for wild herbs, and among the things they discovered was an immense supply of a tall, coarse, vigorous weed of the *Stramonium* family, to wit, the Jamestown, or Jimson weed, then, as now, the chief agricultural product of Virginia. This weed they made into a salad—with rather surprising effects. That is to say, the salad turned out to be intoxicating, and according to the celebrated Robert Beverley, the first historian of Virginia, all the men who ate it "turn'd natural Fools upon it for several Days."

These pioneers, having all the seventeenth century dread of poisons, thereafter avoided the Jimson weed, and it bears an ill name to this day. But with

hard liquor gone and soft liquor going and even near-beer fast turning to ditch-water—well, why not? I throw out the suggestion in a purely humanitarian spirit. Jimson weed is almost universally dispersed in America—there are thousands of acres of it on Long Island within ten miles of New York, it is cured by simple drying, and all that is needed to extract its hooch is to boil it in water. Get down a *seidel* of the resultant extract—and at once you will have all the inspiring effects of a bottle of champagne.

I speak by the book, though I have never tried it; if you don't believe me turn to any text-book of *materia medica* and see what it says about the *Datura stramonium*. There you will find that, in small doses, it produces a slight dizziness, hot flushes and an exhilaration not unlike that of sparkling wine or orgiastic religion, and that in large doses it produces "wild delirium, convulsions, stupor and paralysis." You will have to find out just when to stop—each for himself! No doubt former whiskey-drinkers will be able to stand a good deal more than former beer-drinkers.

The curious thing about this home-made Jimson weed *kümmel* is that it was well known to the Indians. They used to brew large vats of it, and then devote a week or two to drinking it. It was served, in fact, at the wedding of Pocahontas, and the bridegroom, Mr. Rolfe, was much fuddled by it. But the majority of the early whites, having the experience of Capt. Smith's soldiers in mind, were afraid to drink it, and so it gradually acquired a sinister reputation, and for a century or more it has not been brewed. Now, after its long exile, it promises to come back. No complex and baffling technic is demanded. Simply go to the nearest cemetery, public dump or suburban town, pluck an armful of the weed, dry it for five days, boil it in a tea-kettle, and then stretch out on a couch and prepare for pleasant dreams. It is fool-proof. It is police-proof. It is Presbyterian-proof.

§ 7

The World's Greatest Con Game.—
Con amore.

§ 8

Interlude Sentimentale.—Ah, those far-off, half-forgotten days, when there was yet enough alcohol in malt to make a vase romantic, and the girls were not afraid of shocking a man of my years, and I roamed the great world, sipping beauty like a bee. . . . I'll never forget one flaming spring morning at Versailles, perhaps between 10 A.M. and 10.15. Ed. Moffett and I stood on the little bridge near the Petit Trianon watching the famous carp leap in the tiny stream below.

"Those carp," said Ed, "are happy. They never get sore feet hoofing through these wet woods. They are never thirsty. They have no religion. They don't know that Marie Antoinette is dead. They have never heard of Socialism."

To make conversation I disputed.

"They can't be wholly happy," I argued. "They haven't any vices."

Ed considered the point a moment and then hauled out a large plug of Gravely's Choice, the Corona-Corona of chewing tobaccos.

"It is," he said, "possible."

Then he broke off three inches of the plug and dropped it with great precision into the gaping mouth of the largest carp.

"Come," said Ed. "Let us get away before he discovers how happy he is."

§ 9

Summary of the Philosophy of the American Drama.—A female impersonator removing his wig.

§ 10

Don't Throw This Away!—Here-with an attempt to list the books by Americans, printed during the past ten years, that are of solid merit and value,

and hence worthy of places on a civilized man's bookshelves:

FICTION

- The Good Girl, by Vincent O'Sullivan (*Small-Maynard*).
Jennie Gerhardt, by Theodore Dreiser (*Harper*).
My Antonia, by Willa Sibert Cather (*Houghton-Mifflin*).
The Mysterious Stranger, by Mark Twain (*Harper*).
The Cream of the Jest, by James Branch Cabell (*McBride*).
Salt, by Charles G. Norris (*Dutton*).
Java Head, by Joseph Hergesheimer (*Knopf*).
Stamboul Nights, by H. G. Dwight (*Doubleday*).
Abe and Mawruss, by Montague Glass (*Doubleday*).
You Know Me Al, by Ring W. Lardner (*Doran*).
The Titan, by Theodore Dreiser (*Lane*).
The Hungry Heart, by David Graham Phillips (*Appleton*).
The Rise of David Levinsky, by Abraham Cahan (*Harper*).
Rebellion, by Joseph Medill Patterson (*Reilly-Britton*).
Ethan Frome, by Edith Wharton (*Scribner*).
A Woman of Genius, by Mary Austin (*Doubleday*).
Vandover and the Brute, by Frank Norris (*Doubleday*).
Winesburg, Ohio, by Sherwood Anderson (*Huebsch*).

POETRY

- A Wayside Lute, by Lizette Woodworth Reese (*Mosher*).
The Spoon River Anthology, by Edgar Lee Masters (*Macmillan*).
Airs and Ballads, by John McClure (*Knopf*).
Love Songs, by Sara Teasdale (*Macmillan*).

BIOGRAPHY

- Oscar Wilde, by Frank Harris (*Privately printed*).
Mark Twain, by Albert Bigelow Paine (*Harper*).

TRAVEL

- A Hoosier Holiday, by Theodore Dreiser (*Lane*).
South American Travels, by Harry Stephens (*Knickerbocker Press*).
Daily Notes of a Trip Around the World, by E. W. Howe (*Crane*).

CRITICISM

- Poetry and Dreams, by F. C. Prescott (*Badger*).
The Modern Drama, by Ludwig Lewisohn (*Huebsch*).

MISCELLANEOUS

The Heart of the Puritan, by Elizabeth D. Hanscom (*Houghton*).

The Story of a Common Soldier, by Leander Stilwell (*Privately printed*).

The Backwash of War, by Ellen La Motte (*Putnam*).

Fear and Conventionality, by Elsie Clews Parsons (*Putnam*).

Old Foggy, by James Huneker (*Presser*).

One Man, by Robert Steele (*Kennerley*).

What Is Man? by Mark Twain (*Harper*).

Studies Military and Diplomatic, by Charles Francis Adams (*Macmillan*).

On the Enforcement of Law in Cities, by Brand Whitlock (*Bobbs-Merrill*).

In all, thirty-eight books, a few of them in more than one volume. Nearly half of them are novels—to be precise, eighteen. Not one, perhaps, is worthy to be called a masterpiece; not one is the equal of Conrad's "Lord Jim," or even of Anatole France's "The Revolt of the Angels." But nevertheless, there is much sound and honourable work in them; the American novel begins to take on an unmistakable dignity. No attempt is made to arrange these novels in the order of their merit; their names are simply set down at random. Nor does the list pretend to be exclusive. But there is not a book on it that is without solid value; there is not a book that is not worth reading twice. . . .

§ 11

On Sympathy. — The notion that sympathy is a native virtue, springing full-blown from an inner mellowness

of character, is quite as idiotic as most other notions that men and women believe. The truth is that sympathy is a sort of accidental by-product of two much less reputable things, the one being imagination and the other being experience. Inasmuch as few human beings have any imagination, the bulk of the sympathy on tap in the world comes from experience. The poor are proverbially sympathetic—but only with the poor. One could not picture a pauper sympathizing with an unsuccessful candidate for the presidency, or with a bank president en route to Atlanta, or with a bishop taken in some gaudy amour, or with a musical composer condemned to hear his tone-poem performed by union musicians. The sympathy of women, like that of the poor, is almost purely experiential. They comprehend and "feel for" suffering in others largely because their own lives are full of suffering. Merely to be a woman, indeed, is in itself a terrible experience—so terrible that very few men could survive it.

§ 12

The Burnt Child.—The fundamental trouble with marriage is that it shakes a man's confidence in himself, and so greatly diminishes his general competence and effectiveness. His habit of mind becomes that of a commander who has lost a decisive and calamitous battle. He never quite trusts himself thereafter.



WHEN a man begins talking to a woman in a fatherly manner, she renews her search for a husband.



ÉLÉGIE AMÉRICAINE

By John V. A. Weaver

I WISH I'd took the ring, not the Victrola
You get so tired of records, hearin' and hearin' 'em,
And when a person don't have much to spend
They feel they shouldn't oughta be so wasteful.
And then these warm nights makes it slow in the house,
And sittin's lovely down there by the lake
Where him and me could always useta go.

He thought the Vic'd make it easier
Without him; and it did at first. I'd play
Some jazz-band music and I'd almost feel
His arms around me, dancin'; after that
I'd turn out all the lights, and set there quiet,
While Alma Gluck was singin' "Home Sweet Home,"
And almost know his hand was strokin' my hand.

"If I was you, I'd take the Vic," he says,
"It's somethin' you can use; you can't a ring.
Wisht I had ways ta make a record for you
So's I could stick right with you, even though
Uncle Sam had me." Now I'm glad he didn't;
It would be lots too much like seein' ghosts
Now that I'm sure he never won't come back.

Oh, God! I don't see how I ever stand it!
He was so big and strong! He was some beau!
The swellest dresser, with them nifty shirts
That folded down, and them lovely, nobby shoes,
And always all his clothes would be one color,
Like green socks with green ties, and a green hat,
And everything. We never had no words
Or hardly none. . . . And now to think that mouth
I useta kiss is bitin' into dirt,
And through them curls I usta smooth, a bullet
Has went. . . . I wisht it would of killed me too. . . .

Oh, well. . . . About the Vic . . . I think I'll sell it
And get a small ring anyways. (I won't
Get but a half as good a one as if
He spent it all on one when he first ast me)
It don't seem right to play jazz tunes no more
With him gone. And it ain't a likely chanst
I'll find nobody ever else again
Would suit me, or I'd suit. And so a little
Quarter of a karat, maybe, but a real one
That I could sparkle sometimes, and remember
The home I should of had. . . .

And still, you know,
The Vic was his idea, and so . . . I wonder. . . .

THE RUBBER BALL

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

I

JOHN GIBBS was forty-five. His wife was forty-three, with the contours, the dignity and the brains of a rubber ball; when left to herself, the lady was placid, content to sit in her boudoir all day long, with her round blue eyes fixed on the ceiling.

This ceiling was in no way remarkable. It boasted neither mirror nor decoration of any kind; it was just an unruffled stretch of smooth white plaster. That it satisfied Mrs. Gibbs was obvious; it was indeed the unblemished blankness of it that she loved. Within was the unfurnished mind; above was the spotless expanse of calomine.

No wonder Mrs. Gibbs was unperturbed! In the hands of her husband this woman achieved activity of a sort; she bobbed about in her chair and laughed a very gay and rippling response to whatever attentions he saw fit to lavish on her. It was quite as if he were playing a game with an inherently inane object, bouncing it up and down with boisterous good-nature and, to show off his own dexterity, keeping the thing in motion for an indefinite period.

Mrs. Gibbs herself never tired of this treatment; her elasticity would have kept her dancing at his side forever. Approaching middle-age and downright unwieldiness were powerless to deaden her resilience. It was always John who grew weary; Mrs. Gibbs, when he had done with her, would still keep in motion for a time, still bounce a bit, as it were, but with decreasing force, until at last she came to rest

again, serene in her rubber ball passivity.

There were two blonde, plump daughters, whom Mrs. Gibbs had, in all gaiety and unconcern, brought into the world before she was well out of her teens.

Rhoda and Dorothy were twenty-four and twenty-three respectively. They were no longer mere Gibbsses. Reared in the belief that the cleverest thing a girl can do is to get married before she is mature enough to make her debut, Rhoda and Dorothy had both become matrons at seventeen. Mrs. Morland, the elder, had already four babies to her credit; moreover, she had without a single pang gained forty pounds since her wedding. Mrs. Mason, at twenty-three, was the slightly apologetic mother of two infants, with only twenty-nine pounds acquired under her husband's roof; she had begun to be afraid that her sister's record was unique, unbreakable.

John, it must be remembered, was forty-five; with three such substantial women on the scene, a man would naturally at this period of his life be settled and even inclined towards weariness. Not so John, however. Handsome, choleric and active, he had the roseate outlook of a boy; indeed, he fell in love with everything he encountered.

Absurd little enthusiasms were his; for example, it had been his practice for a decade to leap out of bed at six-thirty every morning in summer and, clad in abominable clothes, to make tracks through the dewey grass straight for a mowing-machine. Once at the handle, he would plunge across the lawn with the fine fury of a charioteer.

Fountains of fresh-smelling grass would spurt up around him as he sped along; the sharp blades under his guidance would emit a thin but piercing hum, as of a plague of locusts. The women would be startled from their delicious slumber into aggrieved wakefulness.

Gibbs, usually very thoughtful, in this case was ruthless; no entreaties could move him from his mad course. Seven-thirty would find him, appallingly pink from exertion but uncommon blithe notwithstanding, leaving muddy footprints on the stairs as he ascended to the cold bath that awaited him. Throwing off his clothes jubilantly, he would scold and argue with his lean and delicate valet, warning the chap against a sedentary life, even offering to supply him with a mowing-machine of his own for purposes of exercise.

Gibbs was proud to the point of boastfulness on the subject of grass-cutting; the gardeners were hard put to it to run over the lawn after the master had not got through and to shave neatly, without being seen, the places he had in his uproarious progress neglected. Had anyone been discovered in the illicit act, there would have been an explosion.

It was the same with tennis. When the girls were hardly higher themselves than a racket, Gibbs had them haled to the court by their nurses. There they underwent terrifying ordeals, all in the name of practice. Rhoda was hopeless from the first; no amount of sternness or of coaxing was of any avail. She simply couldn't hit a ball, that was all there was to it. Her arms seemed to be stuck into their sockets in such fashion as to bar athletic feats of every sort. Her serve for the most part resolved itself into a lob of ludicrous feebleness; the ball was sure to sink to the ground long before it reached the net.

One day, when the unfortunate little thing was at an extremely sensitive age, her father caught her with a smart drive, right in the pit of the stomach. A complete loss of breath

followed the soft thud of the impact; Rhoda was quite sure she had received her death-blow. From that day, she refused pointblank to face her brutal father on the court; her tennis efforts ended then and there.

Dorothy persevered and played a rattling good game by the time she was fifteen. Marriage stopped her in mid-career. If Edward Mason had not showed up when he did, she would have had her father at her mercy. Gibbs would without doubt have resented a trouncing from an upstart daughter; so it was just as well she gave up tennis for babies and avoirdupois.

John Gibbs was incurably the impressionable youth. Not the least potent of his ardours was the worship of beauty as embodied in pretty women.

Marriage in his case had been such a calm and simple relation that he at no time was sufficiently absorbed by it to be free from the throes and ecstasies of flirtations. He had begun to fall in love indiscriminately many years before rushing into wedlock; and naturally enough, after his wedding he kept right on being victimized by his heart. The vows he had stammered out at the altar had not the effect of an inoculation against the disease he suffered from; they had no effect at all, if the truth be told.

Carrie was an adorable wife and could be counted on to make things pleasant; but she might just as well have been a baby, for all the power she had of keeping Gibbs's eyes from roving afar. He still looked out upon the world; and he still received the relentless winged shafts that pierced his heart and vibrated there, to his intense joy and feverish unrest.

In spite of the fact that Gibbs was wealthy and something of a sport, he was more innocent than any adolescent. The only wicked things about him were his complexion and his clothes from Poole. He adored women and never concealed it from them. Extravagant compliments he excelled in. Once in a great while, he permitted himself the

liberty of stroking a white hand; he had even been known to plant a kiss on a seductive pair of lips.

Forgetting his obese Carrie altogether, he often felt the elation and wondrous thrill of a man who has just become engaged for the first time. Being a true and chivalrous aristocrat, Gibbs confined himself to the women of his own class. He hid nothing from his wife.

He would often treat Carrie to an effusion of this sort:

"Carrie dear, did you ever see such a winner as Mrs. Chester? She has the most *wonderful* eyes; and her neck and arms! For such a slender woman it's absolutely remarkable. And she's got such a jolly, sentimental way about her. We had a long talk last night at Reggie Brown's. We fell for each other, I can tell you!"

Mrs. Gibbs would laugh in her pretty, blithe way.

"You shouldn't flirt like that," she would always tell him; her voice, high and birdlike and ineffectual, was charming. "You will spoil the other men's chances, John."

This tribute delighted him. It gave the finishing touch to his self-content.

Carrie never for a moment suspected that people poked fun at John. John didn't suspect it either. He thought himself an unconscionable beau, the object of all men's jealousy. He pitied the husbands of the women he became infatuated with. It would have hurt him no end had he known the kindly, superior attitude everybody assumed in speaking of him.

"John Gibbs is an old fool—and a fearful bore!—but a good chap just the same." So the men dismissed him.

The women were no more generous. "Isn't John Gibbs absurd? He cornered me last night at the Browns' dance and talked perfect rot for an hour at least." Thus Mrs. Carter. And in the same vein all the ladies of his desire unburdened themselves confidentially. "But so good-hearted,—and a gentleman. Of course one puts up with him; one would be brutal not to."

Gibbs *was* a dear; it came to that in the end. Mild affection, as towards a garrulous maiden-aunt, was what people felt for him. Gibbs was unique, undeniably. He possessed a sleek and worldly-seeming hide; beneath he was guileless, easily as ingenuous as his Carrie.

II

JOHN, when his forty-fifth birthday had passed without leaving him so much as a grey hair or a crow's-foot to warn him of his ripe maturity, fell more desperately in love than ever before. He prostrated himself in all honesty and humility at the feet of young Mrs. Percival.

Now Winifred Percival was just the age of John's daughter Rhoda; indeed she had run off with all the glory at Rhoda's wedding. A beautiful, slender maid of honour, clad like a mauve orchid, is not the sort of attendant a plump bride should choose. Rhoda had never quite forgiven the innocent Winifred for sweeping everything before her on that day. The friendship, however, had not withered away; it survived the shock. It was at Rhoda's house that John Gibbs met Winifred time and again and in the end succumbed unconditionally.

Winifred too was guileless. Like all girls in the rudimentary stages of experience, she fancied that there was but one way to keep a husband madly in love: the poor fellow must be in a constant fever-heat of jealousy.

Men over forty made particularly nice quarry for the young matron out to flirt, thought Winifred. She therefore buttonholed the susceptible Gibbs with all speed. Winifred accepted John at his surface value and suspected him of being a perfect *roué*. Needless to say, the two got on famously.

Mrs. Percival and Gibbs took to dropping in on Rhoda for tea. They were quite shameless, nibbling away at the choicest little cakes the Morland kitchen afforded, eating quantities of bonbons and in general vying with

each other in the consumption of dainty edibles. They acted as if they owned the place; Rhoda was simply there to pour out things for them and to oppose an obstacle of decorum over which they could signal to each other maliciously.

John's stolid daughter was like a big ornate brick wall planted between them; they talked across it, came within an inch of exchanging winks and even, at times, scaled it with clandestine boldness.

The situation was delicious; Winifred and John had the time of their lives. Their inroads on the larder over, these two rogues would get up and stroll away with most perfunctory and casual messages of thanks to their hostess. They would scamper off to the gardens, to the tennis-court, to any place in fact that hid them from Rhoda.

Bursts of laughter from the unseen truants would float out from clumps of shrubbery or rhododendron walks and assail the ears of Mrs. Morland. If Winifred at this period acted like a silly rattle-brained thing of sixteen, John's conduct was of the sort to disgrace a boy of twelve.

Never before had Gibbs been so sportive, so rollicking. He regaled Carrie with every detail of the good times he and Winifred were having.

Carrie, at rest in her big chair, would beam upon him as he talked. She would wave her round arms feebly and make little curtsying motions, as if she were executing a gay dance to show her pride of possession, her appreciation of this man's sly wiles.

Her light, unquenchably refreshing laugh would bubble from her and fill the room with its brightness.

"Marion Deland told me yesterday that you and Winnie danced *beautifully* together." Thus Carrie. "She said, 'John doesn't look a day over twenty; it's a delight to see those two children on the dance-floor.'"

And Carrie raised her arms as high as she was able, fluttering the lids over her round eyes and swaying passionate-

ly in the rhythm of "The Blue Danube."

John roared out his appreciation of Mrs. Deland's flattering commentary. "Winnie's a stunning dancer," he admitted. "She's nothing but thistle-down, doesn't seem to weigh an ounce, you know. A man can't help making a good showing with Winnie."

This with becoming modesty.

One afternoon at Rhoda's, Winifred tripped away as soon as tea was over, leaving John at the mercy of his daughter.

"I'm so sorry, John," apologized the unblushing Winifred. "I wanted you to show me those Scotch Highland puppies that were hatched today. But I *must* be off. Don't forget,—I count on you for tomorrow."

Alone with her father, Rhoda went right to the point:

"I think you're acting in a very silly way, Papa. A man with six grandchildren ought to have a little dignity, a sense of decency."

John strove to hit the jocular note:

"Well, it's not my fault if I have six grandchildren; you're the guilty one, it seems to me. A girl of twenty-four shouldn't do things up quite so brown as you have."

Rhoda presented a blank countenance. Her way of registering disapproval was to efface all expression.

"At least I do nothing that a young wife should be ashamed of," she drawled.

"Heaven forbid!" protested John. "You're a perfect pillar of maternity. But, don't you see, by having a child of your own at eighteen, you rather took the wind out of my sails. If you hadn't stepped in as you did, Carrie and I might have had a boy yet. But with a grandson before him, a man gets discouraged no end. Now the Gibbs line will be extinct."

"Please don't try to be clever; you're only being vulgar." Rhoda affixed her expressionless eyes on a sofa-cushion. "I am going to tell you this afternoon what I should have told you long ago. You and Winifred Percival are behav-

ing disgracefully. I don't say you've done anything wrong; I know you haven't. But this flirting and philandering at forty-five is inexcusable,—and with a girl the age of your own child."

"What nonsense!" John chuckled. "Winnie's a dear, just like my own daughter. Why, think of the years when I used to jog her up and down on my knee."

"That makes no difference. When a girl is married, it's time she gave up such things." Rhoda was vague.

"My dear Rhoda, do you mean you think I *still* take her on my knee?" John shook with merriment. "I don't, I swear by all that's holy."

A tiny shiver raced up Rhoda's spine; but her spine being buried at least an inch below the surface, the shiver passed unnoticed.

"Don't think you can silence me by joking," she announced. "For years, I have seen you paying attention to women. I have said nothing, because I felt it wouldn't be delicate for a daughter to discuss that sort of thing with her father. I left it to Mother; but, since Mother does nothing and since *this* case demands attention, I find I am forced to talk to you."

"Of course your mother does nothing." John was incisive. "She's absolutely content; I tell her all about Winnie and she likes me to. We have perfect pow-wows together over Winnie. Carrie loves the girl just as much as I do."

"Poor Mother!" was all Rhoda gave out in response.

"Why in thunder do you say 'Poor Mother!'?" John didn't understand.

"Because I know that she is cut to the heart, because I know how terribly she feels this slight. Do you suppose she enjoys neglect? Do you think for a moment she is happy while you run about after other women?"

Rhoda's words were melodramatic, but her pose remained apathetic. Her gaze was still at rest on the plump sofa-cushion.

Gibbs shook his head.

S.S.—Sept.—4

"Look here, Rhoda," he said, "don't you worry about your mother; I've lived with her for twenty-five years and I understand her a long sight better than you do. Carrie wouldn't tip the scales at a hundred and sixty if she worried, now would she?"

Rhoda sighed. "My life is one of constant anxiety and I weigh a hundred and fifty. Because mother is stout, you feel that you may behave as badly as you choose."

"It's not only because she's stout," demurred Gibbs. "She's so damned jolly, you know. You're rather an ass, Rhoda, it seems to me,—kicking up this row over nothing at all."

"Papa!" Rhoda's voice rose for the first time. "I ask you not to speak insultingly to me in my own house."

"All right." John yielded the point. "Mother is unhappy." Rhoda took it for granted that the thing was settled. "She keeps it from you, of course, because she has very old-fashioned ideas. She believes a woman should not burden others with her cares, not even the one who causes those cares. You are too selfish to realize such delicacy on her part. You have to be told."

Gibbs pondered it.

"I don't believe a word of this," he protested, but without his usual conviction.

Rhoda's weighty certainty was causing him misgivings, in spite of himself.

"At least you ought to put it to the test." Rhoda seldom permitted herself a conversation of such length. Despite her earnestness, she was getting sleepy; a succession of yawns played havoc with her face.

With unwonted tenacity, she kept to her subject and followed it through to the end.

"All I ask of you is this," she urged, her articulation becoming more and more indistinct. "Papa, please give up all flirting; devote yourself *entirely* to mother and see if what I say isn't true. You will soon find a light in her eyes that isn't there now."

Rhoda's voice trailed away in senti-

mental softness; her eyes, glazed with sleep, were half-shut.

"I'll do it," promised Gibbs. "I'll do it,—but under protest. You've talked rot, pure drivel I swear, this whole afternoon. I never heard such nonsense."

He got up and scuffled out of the room.

"Preposterous, — utterly preposterous!" he tossed at the somnolent Rhoda as he crossed the threshold.

He kept on growling and muttering, "Mere tommyrot,—utterly preposterous!" until he reached his own house.

III

FOR a week, John Gibbs kept at Carrie's side and examined her with intensity. She would sit before him in her soft-cushioned chair, her absurdly short arms at rest, her little fat feet, which missed the floor by a good twelve inches, on a stool.

It was quite true, John admitted to himself many times, that there was no light of any sort in her eyes; he had never before noticed how rayless she was. *Could it be unhappiness?*

He vexed his mind with the question, found he was pitying her in his heart and grew to loathe himself for a brute. Rhoda's words had struck in, not a doubt of it. John began to watch in melancholy taciturnity for the first flicker of the new and transfiguring radiance his constant attendance would fan to activity in those eyes.

Carrie was dazed by the turn events had taken; she was at a loss, distinctly uneasy and shy before him. After long silences, during which her husband gazed at her without so much as a moment's wavering, she would break out into a gush of unmeaning laughter and begin to move her arms faintly like clumsy flippers; but somehow the outburst would fail of conviction, missing the note of jollity.

John would smile a tender response and try his best to think of something worth saying. To his bitter dismay, he discovered at last that it was impossible to keep a single topic going, now

he had turned over a new leaf; the knowledge came to him that he and his wife had had but one subject of conversation in the past,—the flirtations he had indulged in. As John stood before her at present, he was like a peddler without his pack of gay and tantalizing wares; he was struck dumb.

Gibbs still rose at six-thirty and made with all speed for the lawnmower; but somehow his heart was not *in* the work. The machine under his hand seemed to echo his state of mind; it would hang back from its task with an introspective purring, as if a mental burden, racking it, had sapped its physical strength. The new-mown grass no longer leaped high into the air on either side; rather it appeared to bow its neck sadly to the axe and welcome the kindly deathblow.

Gibbs did his best to overcome this bewildering lassitude within himself and this weary response of Nature to his mood. He would shake his head savagely, curse at the machine and dash ahead at breakneck speed; but in a moment he would find that, unconsciously, he had slackened the pace and was crawling over the turf. He ended by giving up the job in despair soon after seven. He took to scolding his valet roundly and to shivering at the shock of his cold bath.

With a cowardice he would have thought himself incapable of a fortnight before, John ran a generous amount of water from the hot faucet into the tub one morning when Hubbard was out of ear-shot. This confession of weakness made the cup of his self-loathing overflow.

John cursed himself for a misanthrope, for a hypochondriac, even for an old woman. It must be, he admitted, that the years were beginning to crush him with their weight.

Three months more of this would see *him*, John Gibbs, with a paunch! Better death than that, he had always cried; now he surprised himself in a lethargic acceptance of the hateful protuberance that was to be.

Poor Carrie at the end of the week

was even more miserable than John. The light had not come into her eyes; instead, a cloud of anxiety had crept in and dimmed the porcelain-like polish of them. Her rotund Little Mary, which had ever been as sound as a bell, became upset. The unfortunate creature for the first time suffered, mentally and physically.

Had this situation of Rhoda's making gone on for three months, John Gibbs would indubitably have had his paunch and Carrie would have been in her grave. It was for Dorothy, the younger daughter, to precipitate the blessed crisis.

Dorothy entered her mother's boudoir one afternoon in a state of intense perturbation. She greeted John with a wondering lift of the eyebrows; it was the fourth time that week she had found him on the scene and she was unable to conceal her surprise.

For a few moments, she talked in a wild and incoherent way about her babies.

Then, squaring her shoulders, she plunged.

"I've got something on my mind; I *can't* keep it to myself," she announced. "Mama and Papa, I am a very unhappy girl."

John and Carrie gasped out their incredulity, their protest at the complexity and the injustice of life.

"Yes, I am unhappy," Dorothy went on. "Edward is not the husband he should be. He is thoughtless and unkind."

"My darling Dot!" John was at sea. "What has he done to you?"

A grisly vision danced before his eyes; he could see with terrible distinctness his irate son-in-law wiping the floor up with Dot, thumping her roundly, blacking both her eyes. He grew purple with indignation.

"Oh, he *does* nothing," elucidated Dorothy. "He simply is beginning to ignore me, to treat me with indifference. If you *knew* how I've struggled, in the past three months! I used to be so contented and I didn't mind getting

fat,—I liked it, I really did; but Rhoda told me I was losing my hold on Edward. Of course I couldn't bear that. I got right to work on myself. I have a masseuse for two hours every day; she slaps me and kneads me and all that sort of thing but somehow I can't seem to lose an ounce. I do my best to amuse Edward. I play tennis with him; I'm taking dancing-lessons too. But he neglects me. He runs away from me and flirts with other girls; and then he makes matters worse by talking about the creatures to *me*. Oh, I am so wretched! I kept all this from you, because I didn't want to worry you. What *shall* I do, Mama?" Dorothy's tears were already flowing.

At this moment Mrs. Gibbs did a strange thing. She filled the air with a lilting chirrup of laughter, spontaneous and gay. Dorothy jumped and looked hurt; John rushed in terror to his Carrie's side. She waved him away and trod a dainty measure with her feet on the little stool in front of her.

"Dot, my love," she carolled, "you are a silly duck. Look at your father and mother. John runs after pretty ladies and tells me about them. I hope he always will. Roly-polies like us should all have flirty husbands, my sweet. We must make ourselves in love with love-affairs. Then our husbands will be glad to tell us everything. Fat people *are* lazy. We can sit back, don't you see, and enjoy the stories of sweethearts second-hand. Dot darling, Edward can't be a worse flirt than Johnnie. Don't try to keep up with him. Sit back like me. I am the happiest, coziest little woman in the world."

Mrs. Gibbs beamed on them with her old-time serene vacuity. Dorothy was still too thunderstruck to grasp the profound truth her mother had delivered in such sugared language; but John understood.

In all delicacy, Carrie had just implored him to go back to the old promiscuous life; she had got her grievance off her mind in skilful fashion. She had

told him how blank the world was without the delectable accounts of his love-affairs. John burst into a guffaw of immense joy.

He was standing at a window; suddenly he shouted "By Jove!" kissed Carrie with tremendous enthusiasm and was off.

He met Mrs. Percival at the foot of the verandah steps.

"What *has* become of you, John?" queried Winifred. "Have you been ill? I've been asking Edward Mason about you every day. He's been most unsatisfactory so I decided to find out for myself." She gave him her most roguish smile.

John had both her hands by this time. "Do come right down to the kennels, Winnie dear. You must see the Scotch Highland pups!"

They scampered off. From the house a lark-like call reached them. At her boudoir window stood Carrie, out of breath from the exertion of piloting herself across the floor, but nevertheless radiant. She trilled out a greeting to Winifred, waved a hand prettily and warbled a benediction: "Have a good time, sweet children!"

John grasped Winnie's arm and broke into a frisky canter. He was a boy once more; he would be forever paunchless!



THE UNFORTUNATE

By T. F. Mitchell

HIS poor memory and absent-mindedness had got him into such an unfortunate mixup that he resolved to end it all. He carefully stuffed the keyhole, the window cracks, and then threw himself on the bed. Next morning when he did not appear at breakfast they went upstairs and smashed in the door. They found him snoring peacefully. He had forgotten to turn on the gas.



THE PRAYER

By Bertha Bolling

I STAND away, to watch you as you pass
 Within the temple gates; because, to-day,
 As other days, I know that you will come—
 And enter in to pray.

I see the hyacinths shimmer by the wall;
 And then, I catch their fragrance on the air.
 But, no! It is the colour of your eyes—
 The perfume of your hair!

ENCHANTERS OF MEN

X

The Sport of Love

By Thornton Hall

I

"HOW is it possible to live without love?" Adrienne Le Couvreur wrote to her life-long friend d'Argental; and this sentence, says Paléologue, might have been her motto. She was cradled for love; she lived for it; and for love she died, pleading with her last breath for a few more days to love.

"Just a few days more," she whispered. "I am so young, and life is so sweet."

To Adrienne love was the one and only boon to be desired.

"What is living without love?" was her constant cry.

She sought it eagerly, feverishly, only to find that, when it did not elude her, it soon turned cold within her arms. Beauty and fame and riches were hers, all unsought, but the supreme dower of love's reward was denied her, and in the bitterness of its denial she declared "a vindictive and jealous goddess presided over my cradle and directed my destiny with a pitiless violence of persecution."

When Adrienne Couvreur (the prefix "le" was a later addition) was born one day in 1692, there was nothing in her cradling to foreshadow the brilliant career that was to be hers. She first opened her eyes in a sordid slum of Damerly, and had for father a drunken journeyman-hatter, who was destined to end his misspent days in a madhouse. From him, no doubt, she inherited the mental gloom which shadowed her days

of greatest triumph and gave good fortune the complexion of calamity; from her mother she received her dower of loveliness and the brilliant gifts which made her the greatest actress of her day.

Even as a child these budding gifts were the wonder of the Paris slum to which her father had migrated when she was still an infant. Children left their play and grown-ups their work or gossip to look on and applaud while the hatter's little girl danced and acted before them; and such was the infection of her enthusiasm that by the time she was thirteen Adrienne was manageress of a troupe of slum children, whom she had trained so cleverly that she was able to produce a play—Corneille's "Polyeucte"—in a room lent for the purpose by a kindly grocer in the Rue Ferou.

So remarkable was the child's presentment of Pauline, the heroine, that night after night the grocer's room was crowded almost to suffocation by audiences, now melted to tears, now roused to a frenzy of applause; and as the fame of the little tragedienne spread, all Paris—even the great ladies of the Court—was flocking to the Rue Ferou to see the wonderful acting of the "gutter girl."

Adrienne's triumph was destined to be as brief as it was brilliant. Such was the jealousy of the players of the Théâtre Français, when they saw the house emptied of their best clients, that the help of the law was invoked to sup-

press their rivals of the "East End," and one night the police appeared, and the door of the slum theater was effectively closed.

But although Adrienne's début was thus brought to an ignominious end her fame survived. There could be no doubt as to her career, and we soon find her travelling with a touring company through Lorraine, Flanders, and Alsace, winning fresh laurels wherever she went by her brilliant acting, and turning all heads by her beauty and charm. Before she had reached her nineteenth birthday she was the acknowledged queen of the provincial stage, the chief actress at the Court of Lorraine, and was drawing a salary of 200 livres a year at Strasburg.

Even thus early Adrienne had counted her lovers by the score—among them a handsome young Baron, an officer of the Regiment of Picardie, to whom she had given her heart in its first and full surrender. But the evil Fate that was to follow her love affairs through life was already dogging her steps, and after a few months of "happiness too great for words" her lover died suddenly, and she was left broken-hearted and desolate.

For long months she was plunged in such grief that more than once she was on the point of suicide. Nor was she any more fortunate when, to forget her grief, she sought solace in the love of Philippe Le Roy, the handsomest man in the Lorraine Court; for, after a few months of dalliance, Le Roy brutally deserted her for other eyes and arms which he found more attractive, caring nothing that the woman who had surrendered to him all she held most dear was about to become the mother of his child.

Twice Adrienne had sipped the cup of love, only to find its dregs exceedingly bitter to the taste. But she was young, and even such cruel disillusion had no power to quench her thirst for a love that should be true and satisfying, or to stay her pursuit of it.

She had, too, her art to solace her, and the prospect of the stage queendom

which she knew would be hers. And this crowning triumph came to her when, after two years of "starring" in the provinces, she made her début in Paris with the Comédie Française one May day in 1717.

At her first appearance in a double bill of tragedy and comedy—as *Electre* in the play of that name, and as *Angélique* in Molière's "*Georges Dandin*"—her success was immediate, electrical. The audience was swept off its feet by a wave of such enthusiasm as Paris had never known within living memory. No actress had ever had such a power "to move by a sigh, to thrill by a glance, or to terrify by a cry." Tears and laughter were alike hers to summon at will; she held the house spell-bound from the moment she set foot on the stage to her exit.

Within a week her fame had traveled beyond the capital to the far corners of France. As for Paris she became at once bound its idol—not only of the stage, but of Society. Duchesses received her in their salons with arms of welcome; every poet who could string rhymes sang her praises, and painters vied with each other to put her charms on canvas. Voltaire wrote of her as a woman who "in Greece would have had altars erected in her honour"; and d'Allainval, writing to a friend in England, ranked her among the "four marvels of Paris," second only to the Tuileries.

Of all her portraits it is unfortunate that only one survives, and this in the form of an engraving of a picture by Coypel. This reveals a woman daintily fashioned, from her small, beautifully poised head to her exquisitely moulded arms and delicate fingers; with large, upturned eyes of unspeakable sorrow. In one contemporary description she is pictured as "about the middle height and admirably formed, with a noble and confident air, a well-poised head and shapely shoulders, eyes full of fire, a pretty mouth, and a slightly aquiline nose. Although not plump, her face was somewhat full, with features admirably adapted to express sorrow and

joy, tenderness, fear and pity." In others she is described as "a small and exquisite creature," "infinitely elegant and gracious"; and "full of charm, simplicity, and elegance."

Such, in cold prose, was the woman whose beauty and genius as an actress took Paris by storm in the spring of 1717, and who was raised on a pedestal higher than those of her greatest rivals in beauty or histrionic gifts. But such triumph, dazzling, instantaneous as it was, was far from satisfying the imperious demands of her nature. The love which alone could fill the cup of her happiness was still lacking. Would it always elude and fail her?

It seemed, indeed, that at last this supreme boon was to be hers when Clavel, obscure actor though he was, entered her life and, before she realized it, took possession of her heart. But it was not long before she discovered that her passion met with a cold response. How gladly would she have surrendered herself to him, body and soul, if he had but shown that her surrender would be dear to him. But, in spite of all her allurements, all the wealth of love she was eager to lavish on him, Clavel remained unresponsive. His heart, possibly, was not his to give.

Of the letters she wrote him only two survive; but they are eloquent of the depth and tenderness of her love, and also of her grief that he has so little love to give her in return. In the first of them she writes:

"I have at last received that letter for which I have been astounding Notre Dame des Carmes with my prayers. I embrace thee with all the tenderness of my heart, and swear to thee a constancy proof against all things."

And when at last she realizes that all her love is fruitless, she bids him choose his own course, with a touching dignity and unselfishness.

"Follow your inclination," she writes, "without too much thought for me. I shall resign myself as well as I can, whether I gain or lose you. Be always persuaded that I love you for yourself a hundred times more than on my own

account. If I lose you, I shall hope that it may not be entirely; that I shall still have a little of your esteem. If you are happy I shall be glad to know that I have not stood in your way; and if you are not, it will not be I who have made you unhappy—and so I shall try to console myself."

But Clavel was not to be moved from his indifference even by such touching appeals. Once more Adrienne was to feel the bitterness of disillusion; and we cannot wonder that, in her grief, she should write:

"I am utterly sick of love, and feel greatly tempted to have done with it for the rest of my life; for after all I have no wish to die or go mad."

It was, however, Adrienne's fate to love to her last day, and always to find the happiness she yearned for slip from her grasp. So it was when, later, François de Klinglin, son of Strasburg's first magistrate, came to her with vows of undying fidelity. Under a promise of marriage he induced her to surrender herself to him, only, after a few months of a "fool's paradise," to abandon her for a more gilded bride when Adrienne was about to become a mother for the second time.

So it was, too, when D'Argental, Voltaire's protégé, a youth of handsome exterior and brilliant gifts, brought to her all the rich treasures of his boy's heart. He loved her passionately, madly; but she had no love to give him in return, and the friendship she offered in its place was poor solace for such a love as his. So alarmed were the boy's parents at his mad infatuation that they sent him to England in the hope of cooling his ardour; and when he returned to Paris more hopelessly her slave than ever, they would have shipped him off to St. Domingo had not Adrienne, in one of the most beautiful letters ever penned by woman, pleaded for him and promised never to see him again.

II

THUS always did the great and coveted gift of love elude the ill-fated

Adrienne, on whom Fortune lavished all else that she could give. All her triumphs on the stage and in society were as nothing to her compared with this great denial. Once more in her bitterness she vowed that she would seek love no longer.

"Love," she wrote to one of the most ardent of her wooers at this time, "is nothing else but a folly which I detest, and to which I shall strive hard not to surrender myself as long as I live. Be my friend—I am worthy of that—but choose for mistress one who possesses a heart quite untampered with; who has not yet repented of that trust which renders everything so beautiful."

But although Adrienne imagined that she had barred her heart forever against any further assaults, its door sprang open at the very first knock of the man who was destined to bring into her life its one great romance, and with it much suffering and tragedy. This new and last comer into the lists of love was none other than Maurice de Saxe, whose appearance in Paris in 1720 set the heart of every woman a-flutter.

In the days of Louis, the "well-beloved," there was no more brilliant man in Europe than Maurice de Saxe, Marshal of France and Commander-in-Chief of her armies. When he was born in 1696, the son of Augustus II., King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, and his beautiful "light o' love," Countess Aurora of Königsmarck, the most benevolent of fairies presided over his cradling, for he had inherited with his father's physical strength and perfections, the great beauty of his mother. As a boy of twelve he performed prodigies of valour on the field of Malplaquet; at seventeen he was leading his regiment of Cuirassiers to battle, and at twenty-two he was the most famous soldier in Europe, the hero of a hundred fights.

It was at this time that de Saxe made his first appearance in Paris, and began that career of amorous conquest which made him as famous in the lists of love as in war. He was the Napoleon of his day, with all Napoleon's

hot-blooded passion and ruthlessness in his wooing. But while the "little Corsican" had few physical advantages, de Saxe was a man of magnificent physique. He had the frame of a Hercules and the proud carriage of a King among soldiers; his face was as handsome as Apollo's, and he was as skilled in all the graces of a courtier as in the arts of wooing.

The most beautiful women in France were drawn to this hero of romance as moths to a flame, and with the same consequences; for one after another they burnt their pretty, fluttering wings. One after another Maurice toyed with his playthings, wearied of them, and cast them aside. They ministered in turn to his vanity and his pleasure, and when they had served his purpose he had no more use for them. He was as devoid of honour in his love-making as of pity for his victims, and wherever his conquering steps took him he left behind him a wake of ruined lives.

Among the many beautiful women who in turn fed the flames of de Saxe's passion, three are of special interest—Mademoiselle Gautier, Adrienne Lecouvreur, and Madame Favart.

Mademoiselle Gautier attracts us not so much by her connection with the great soldier as by the strange romance and pathos of her life. Indeed, we only catch a few casual glimpses of her in the story of de Saxe's adventures in love; as when once she engaged in a trial of strength with her lover, "gripping hands to see which of them could bend back the other's wrist. He, on his part, could break crown pieces and horseshoes with his fingers, like his father, Augustus the Strong, before him; she, on hers, boasted that she could roll up a silver plate as if she were making pastry with it. In the end he prevailed over her; but he said that he had never before had so tough a tussle."

Mademoiselle Gautier seems to have been the only one of de Saxe's many lights o' love whose life his passion failed to wreck. A very different fate was that of Madame Favart, a beautiful young actress happily wedded to the di-

rector of one of his operatic companies in Flanders, of whom he wrote to his sister, the Princess von Holstein,

"I want to tell you that for three years I have been in love with a little girl who treats me badly and who has completely turned my head. She is possessed by a demon of conjugal love—I have tried in vain to conquer her."

With what heartlessness and cruelty he pursued her, until, shattered in health and half demented by despair, he at last broke down the barriers of her resistance, and then, his desire for conquest satisfied, flung her contemptuously aside, is one of the most pathetic and tragic stories in human history.

Such was the seductive and dangerous man at first sight of whom, in the spring of 1720, Adrienne's heart capitulated; and in capitulating she knew that this time her conqueror, for good or ill, had come to stay. Compared with the passion that now possessed her, all her previous adventures in love were but as rushlights to a blinding, devouring flame. Long as she vainly yearned for love, she had never imagined a love such as this; nor was it long before her happiness was complete with the discovery that Maurice, her king of men, had chosen her from all other women as worthy of his love.

III

THEN followed a few months of such happiness as she had never dared even to dream of. Her cup was now full to the brim; the draught was intoxicating. For a few months she was all Maurice's and he was all hers.

But the greatest Lothario in Europe could not long be constant to any woman, however alluring. He longed for fresh conquests—the fragrance of other lips, the warmth of other arms; and so it was to be now. But in spite of all his infidelities, many of them conducted openly under her very eyes, Adrienne showed no sign of the wounds that were rankling in her heart; and whenever he came back to her penitent,

she received him with arms of love and welcome.

For three years her dream lasted; then one day her lover left her to try to win the Duchy of Courland, which was then in the market. To provide him with money for his adventure she sold every jewel she possessed, and sent him on his mission with a smiling if tearful face, happy in his promise that he would soon return to her.

He had not been gone long, however, before news came to her that her false knight was making love to the ladies in distant Courland and had actually offered his hand in marriage to two Grand Duchesses, both of whom had declined the offer. When at last he returned to her, having failed both to secure his dukedom and a wife, she received her prodigal with welcoming arms and forgiveness, but only to find that he was still as unfaithful to her as ever. Then, broken-hearted and despairing, she wrote to D'Argental, her former lover and now her faithful friend:

"I am worn out with grief and anger; I have been dissolved in tears this livelong night. It is natural to cry out against such falseness. This man ought to know me, ought to love me—Oh, my God! what am I to do?"

For seven years she had borne her lover's infidelities with almost superhuman patience; and though he had broken her heart, her fate was that she must continue to love him to the last.

But her day of patience was at last exhausted; and when he flaunted before her his flagrant amour with the fair-faced and black-souled Duchesse du Bouillon, her anger found a sweet revenge for the insult.

One day the Duchesse appeared in a box when Adrienne was playing in "Phèdre," and the sight of her rival's smiling, brazen face so infuriated the actress that, turning flaming eyes on her, she hurled out the scathing words of her part:

"I am not one of those hardened women who, tasting a shameful peace

in crime, can show to the world a face which knows not how to blush!"

At the words the audience, who understood their meaning, burst into thunders of applause, while the Duchesse swept out of her box scarlet with mortification and rage.

But the curtain was now soon to fall on the chequered drama of Adrienne's life. One day in 1730 the news flashed over Paris that the great tragédienne had died tragically. It was whispered that she had been poisoned by the Duchesse in revenge for the public insult she had inflicted on her; and support was lent to the rumour by the knowledge that, only a few weeks earlier, the Duchesse had bribed a young student to convey some poisoned lozenges to Adrienne—a dastardly crime which was only averted by his confession to the police.

For four days Adrienne lingered in terrible agony. As the inevitable end drew near, the curé of the parish had been summoned to administer the last sacrament; but to all his pleadings that she would repent and renounce her profession of actress she turned a deaf ear. Then, with a last effort, she raised herself in her bed, and, pointing, with outstretched hand, to a bust of Maurice, she said proudly, with her dying breath,

"There is my world, my hope, and my god!"

Thus impenitent and loving to the last died Adrienne Le Couvreur, at the very zenith of her powers and triumphs. Life had given her all save the one thing she alone craved, a true and enduring love: and, lacking this, she was thankful to lay down its burden, to say farewell to its vanities.

"I am glad," she said, not many hours before the end came, "to go from a world in which nothing seems ever to go right with me."

But even in death the ill-luck she be-moaned in life was still to pursue her. As she had died unshriven, Christian burial was refused to her. Before her body was cold it was carried off at dead of night to a dismal piece of waste ground on the banks of the Seine, outside the city wall, and hastily buried in quick-lime, with not even a stick or stone to mark her grave.

More than half a century passed before an old and feeble man, himself tottering on the verge of the grave, discovered the secret of Adrienne's sordid resting-place; and over it placed a marble tablet, on which were inscribed the tender verses which may be read to-day.

He was D'Argental, the man who had given all his boyish love to her so many years before, when she was the most beautiful and most fêted woman in all France; and who still cherished her memory as his most sacred possession.

As for de Saxe, who gave a further proof of his heartlessness by selling her horses almost before the breath had left her body, he got the Courland Dukedom; and after making Europe ring with the fame of his martial exploits, died full of honours a score of years after the woman who had given her all to him was flung into a nameless grave.

The eleventh article in this series, entitled "A Delilah of the Past," will appear in the next number of THE SMART SET.



A WOMAN'S ambition is unbounded; she will even try to remold her husband into a copy of the man she loves.



WHEN A WOMAN TARRIES

By Gertrude Brooke Hamilton

I

MURIEL was somewhere in her teens when she asked Brice Hathaway to divorce his wife, marry her—and live simply ever after.

She was in love with Brice, of course; in love so openly that it galvanized her mother, amused her father, and shocked all the nice infants of her season, who wouldn't for the world have wasted their charms on an ineligible man.

Muriel Fendall's love for Brice took no count of the conventions; it was like a spring freshet leaping in an unfenced meadow, a bird bursting its throat in song, a flower unfolding to the kiss of the sun.

"Let's live as God meant us to live," cried Muriel, on the heels of her impulsive suggestion. "Let's have a little home somewhere in the country, with baby chickens and apple trees in bloom and rye fields waving near the door; or let's live close to humanity, let's go up to the Bronx and get a flat, and both work, and hang to the same strap in the subway. Oh, Brice," with a break in her voice, "let's be simple, you and I."

Hathaway found a natural enjoyment in these rhapsodies.

"If only we could!" he sighed.

"But we can," she laughed. "We can be anything we choose."

"Can we?" His voice sank with the question.

"And we can do anything we please!" She lifted her hand from the wheel of her roadster—they were in the Westchester hills for a day. "Witness this jaunt, Brice. It pleased me to manœuver it through as much as it might have pleased mamma to outwit it! I think she had half a suspicion of what

I was going to say to you today—the maternal intuition, you know. Poor mamma! Why is it they always forget what love once meant to them?"

"Because they must, I suppose," replied Hathaway, watching her hair blow out in the wind.

She turned a face bright with rebuke.

"There you go again, with your 'musts' and your dour suppositions! The trouble is," tenderly, "you're a drifter; and that's why you've made such a mess of your life, marrying money, falling in love with me, and sighing away your soul. Honey, I'm a doer. Leave the happy solution to me."

He was inclined to laugh, with color heightening in his handsome face and in his eyes a stealing shame. After a second, he ejaculated:

"You're right. I've drifted. Please forgive me if I've worked any harm in your life, Muriel. Be a wise child, and forget me."

His tone suggested a good-bye.

She would not listen to his self-berating, but gave him a look that hotly refuted his having worked anything but good to her, anything but good! Her hands held the wheel of the roadster in a fine, firm grip and the tilt of her head was idyllic, a smile played over her mouth, whose frank redness her mother deplored, and the earth-colored eyes, that her father loved, brimmed with warmth.

"As if I could forget you!" she said.

At a turn of the pike they were traversing, a wagon-road caught her eye, a by-road never made for motoring, just a crooked country thoroughfare full of gullies and gaps.

"Once," she said, laughing, "I found a funny little house at the end of that road; no one was living there, the win-

dows were broken and the doors unhinged, wild honeysuckle had grown into a front room—I got out my tea-basket and had a feast there, all by myself.”

With a swerve that jolted every bolt of the roadster, she took the wagon-path, and laughed again as the gullies almost precipitated them from their seats.

“I’ve brought my tea-basket along with me today, Brice. Oh, wouldn’t mamma quite detest tea in an unlivable hut with wild honeysuckle and no doorsteps!”

Brice laughed with her, at the spectacle evoked: Mrs. Roger Fendall drinking tea in the vacated shanty at the end of the wagon-road.

He had the tea-basket out as soon as they were there, and was sniffing the honeysuckle and pushing open the sagging door with a zest that showed he was already half forgetful of anything but the sunny day, the delightful spot, and tea with Muriel.

In a crumbling room curtained with trellises of green, he set out the tea-things on the floor.

“When you feasted alone did you have to resort to thermos bottle, or did you find a well and a bucket?” he asked her.

“I found the well.” She was carrying the tea-kettle to the door. “Come and see.”

The well was all that a well should be!—with mossy bucket, rusty, creaking chain, and water cold and clear. He filled the kettle and she splashed the rest of the water over him; they had a water-battle for a few minutes, until both of them were sparkling with drops like diamonds. Highly colored, glowing, they carried in the kettle and made tea. As there were no chairs, they sat on the floor. The smell of the honeysuckle filled the room.

“And, now,” said Muriel, over the teacups, “let’s talk again of your divorce. When will you get it?”

“You speak as if getting a divorce were easy as pulling up a bucket of water,” he retorted, gaily.

“Isn’t it?” she questioned.

“I don’t know, not having tried it.”

She reached out for a sprig of honeysuckle, and pulled a flower apart to find its drop of honey.

“I can hardly wait for it to come off,” she sighed. “Mamma will rave—she thinks I should marry no less than a million; and dear old Roger F. will cock a quizzing eyebrow at me. And we’ll be married very simply, you and I.”

She leaned across the impromptu tea-table to put a honied flower to his lips, all her love for him was brimming in her very young face, brooding in her eyes and curving her mouth into love’s bowknot.

He showed that drifting was, perhaps, his worst quality by getting up suddenly and walking to one of the broken windows, where he stood for a moment with his hands in his pockets and his back to her.

“Muriel,” he said, at length, “you aren’t in earnest about me; are you? You’re just filling in the span before you marry some nice ‘doer’ with this flirtation; aren’t you? You don’t really mean this tom-foolery, dear.”

She put the rejected honey-drop to her own lips.

“I mean every word of it, and you know that I do,” undisturbed.

“But, Muriel!”

He came back to the center of the room, looking down at her with flushing face and embarrassed eyes.

“Come, now, you don’t really mean it,” coaxingly. “It isn’t feasible, you know.”

In a friendly way, he sat beside her on the dusty floor and took her hand in his.

“Let me talk to you like a grandfather for a few minutes, dear girl; you don’t love me; you wouldn’t want me for a lifetime; you’re just making up a fairy tale. Your mother is right. You should marry no less than a million. Why, I haven’t a cent of my own. Not a cent, Muriel. I’m the veriest beggar living. I wouldn’t be able to keep up even your roadster! Dear, let’s forget

all about it, and be friends again. Please!"

He patted the hand in his.

She was regarding him with clouding eyes.

"Why don't you tell the truth?" she said, finally. "You don't love me."

He grew red to the roots of his hair, and, trying to laugh, defended himself with:

"Have I ever said I loved you?"

"No," she admitted; "not in words."

"If you've drawn any undue demonstration from my actions," a bit stiffly, "I'm sorry."

"If I have—" Her teeth caught her under lip.

"I'm sorry," he repeated, less constrainedly.

She sat quiescent for a minute or two longer.

"Oh!" was all she said, when she drew her hand from his and jumped to her feet; flaming.

As there seemed no reply to her exclamation, he began to gather up the tea-things; waiting until a pleasanter topic might come into her mind and help out the awkward silence.

She watched him pack the tea-basket.

Stooping to catch up her hat, she cried, with miserable passion.

"You've made love to me with your eyes ever since my first party! You know you have! You've had a good time, waking me up. Well! I'm awake!—Good-bye!"

She dashed from the place, dragging on her hat.

"Muriel!"

By the time he reached the sagging door, she was in her roadster.

He hurried to her, protesting.

"Don't be angry, Muriel! Please, don't be angry with me. Maybe I am to blame." His face was perturbed. "But, sometimes, dear, I'm in deep water."

She had recovered her equilibrium and lost some of the flaring color.

"I'm sorry I can't take you back to town," she shrugged, wrenching the wheel. "Swim back, fly back, crawl back, poor dear!"

She was gone like the wind—a streak of bright color jolting down the wagon-road to the smoother leagues of pike. Carrying out her idea that one should do as she pleased, it pleased her to leave him in the heart of the Westchester hills with no more means of locomotion than her tea-basket!

All the way back to town she drove at mad speed; green scenery flew by her; white roads unwound before her; blue skies reeled over her. She loved him! He did not love her. How was she to go on living?—a spring freshet dammed, a bird with a broken throat, an un-kissed flower.

The face she brought home with her petrified her mother—white cheeks and staring eyes. People who have outgrown youth are apt to be aghast at youth's capacity for suffering!

Mrs. Roger Fendall thought that something really terrible had happened, that the richest man on Muriel's string had cut her dead in public, or that Roger F. had been declared bankrupt. When these possibilities were shattered by Muriel's taut declaration of a headache, Mrs. Fendall put her daughter to bed, deploring the havoc neuralgia could work with beauty. The family physician was hastily summoned; but, as he happened to be out of town, a younger practitioner came in his place to cure Muriel's terrible headache.

"One of the Nords; Doctor George Nord's son, my dear," crooned Mrs. Fendall, introducing the physician to Muriel. "Tell him where the pain is, darling."

Muriel had thrown all her pillows at her maid and bound her head with a handkerchief soaked in exquisite orange-water, her hair hung all about her, under the bandaging kerchief, her eyes were enormous and solemn. "Go away," she said, distinctly, to one of the Nords.

The next thing she knew, she was weeping a freshet of tears on the shoulder of a young doctor, who had eyes that somehow told her he knew the pain was not in her head.

II

MURIEL was somewhere in her twenties when George Nord, junior, asked her, for the seventh time, to marry him, and was rejected.

She did not know quite why she refused him—as she was in a position where matrimony seemed a grave necessity, Roger F. having died insolvent and Mrs. Fendall's hopes of resuscitated fortunes being centered on her marriageable daughter. The Nordes were all well-to-do. She had no real reason for the seventh negative.

"So be it," said Nord, incisively. "I'll not ask you again, Muriel."

She half wished she might believe him, for she was rather inclined to weep whenever they went through a scene like this, that left him so short-tongued.

"I'm sorry," she murmured, sincerely.

"So am I." George Nord looked away from her.

Following his look, she eyed ranges of autumnal mountains and a sky gray above the flaming foliage of Indian Summer—the widow and daughter of the late Roger F. were spending the tag-end of the warm season in the Adirondacks. She was walking with George Nord, and now they entered a wood where, one by one, golden and ocher, scarlet and gray-green, leaves were drifting from the trees. Idly, she stretched out her hand and caught a honey-colored leaf as it fell. She put it to her lips, meditative.

"If only I could!" she sighed.

"Don't worry any more about it," advised Nord, in his crisp way. "I should have taken my medicine long ago, and gone off."

His face locked and he folded his arms.

At the end of the walk through the colorful wood where the leaves were drifting down, he said good-bye to her.

Muriel pressed his hand in both of hers; she was surely not the type to cry easily, yet, for some reason, this particular Nord inevitably started freshets within her. Her step through the fash-

ionable hostelry in which she and her mother were stopping was slower than usual.

In their suite of rooms at the top of the hotel—where Mrs. Fendall was daintily sadding some fine lingerie in a sanctuary of nickel and porcelain—Muriel sank into a chair and sighed, so deeply that her mother echoed the sound.

Poor Mrs. Roger F.! One of the terrible things that had hung over her had descended—Roger's death and bankruptcy. She was now ready to meet the other calamity—the richest man on Muriel's string slipping off.

"What is it, darling?" she asked apprehensively, wringing a cobweb chemise in her thoroughly patrician hands.

"Only George Nord, mamma," replied Muriel, looking at the drifts of suds falling from the fine mull.

Mrs. Fendall's second sigh was one of relief. "I thought, perhaps, you had quarreled again with Mr. Montbell."

Muriel shook her head. Sam Montbell, who had pots of money, was one of Muriel's present admirers.

Stretching a traveling clothes-line and fastening lingerie to it with miniature pins, Mrs. Fendall's modulated voice was edged:

"You have been out a half-dozen seasons. Imagine it! You, with the Fendall looks and my breeding! Muriel, you must not waste another day on young men like George Nord's son. You were meant to marry at least a million. I always said so to your dear father. And now, along comes one of the Montbells, and dangles at your heels for a whole summer! My dear, lose no time. He must speak before we leave here. If he doesn't, I'm sure I don't know what is going to become of us."

The suds gurgled sadly as it sank in the porcelain basin.

Hands locked behind her head in an attitude of disdainful ease, Muriel looked through the window at the mountains, a flock of wild geese was etched against the sky—a glimmer of silvery gray, quickened by the curious

calling, "Onk, onk, onk." She watched the wild geese, with eyes that clouded from the color of the earth to the color of the sky.

Her mother's well-bred voice threaded in and out of her reflections; a direful forecast of what they might come to if Muriel did not make the most of her charms; then the shimmer of wild geese calling up in the sky; a lamentation that people of refinement ever had to suffer poverty; the geese, calling, fainter, and fainter.

Muriel reached to a desk for writing materials.

Face devoid of any special emotion, she wrote to George Nord, bidding him come back and voice an eighth proposal of marriage, that she might accept him. Though she did not cherish any devouring affection for the young physician, marrying him might save her from the Montbell dangling at her heels.

The letter to Nord lay unmailed for a couple of weeks.

A sunset of orange tints flaring behind the mountains made her remember the letter, and send it to him.

Her mother brought up his reply in a batch of late mail one evening—Muriel had gone to bed rather early, with a slight headache, and she stretched her graceful arms in a yawn at the sight of George Nord's chirography. The gist of his letter made her laugh, and repeat the yawn.

"Is that young Nord again?" Mrs. Fendall was opening her own mail at the desk.

"Yes, mamma," said Muriel. "He has just been married. How suddenly they do it, nowadays!"

"Married?" echoed her mother. "George Nord? Well!"

Muriel's fingers tore the letter into long strips and let them drift away. She propped her pillows behind her head to watch her mother open and cogitate over a sheaf of bills; it was true that if Muriel didn't make the most of her charms before long—!

Her eyes fled to a mirror.

III

MURIEL was somewhere in her thirties when Brice Hathaway came back into her life, with a band of crepe on his arm—his wife had died, and cut him off without a penny. He was a trifle stouter, but just as handsome.

She ordered tea for two, to be served in the suite of the New York hotel where she was wintering alone—Mrs. Fendall having found it expedient to accept hospitality from a friend of hers rich enough to extend an invitation on a postal-card and exclude from it Mrs. Fendall's beautiful daughter. Muriel was making the best of what was left of Roger F.'s money; it was not difficult for her to dress exquisitely, as she was the type that honored the smart shops by her patronage, and she managed the problem of delicate food by never having very much appetite, she saw the best plays, heard the operas, read the late books, motored whenever she was inclined to—in short she had become, with the drifting flight of the years, one of those preened, ultra-slim peacocks sometimes glimpsed in the corridors of costly hotels, or of an afternoon on the avenue, or of a morning in some exclusive church.

"How has the world been treating you?" she inquired of the man she had left in the Westchester hills with no more means of locomotion than her teabasket.

"Not very well, Muriel; it's deeper water than ever."

Hathaway took one of her chairs; he appeared to rest in the chair, though it was gilt and too slight for him.

They talked nothings until the tea-wagon came.

"Tea always reminds me—" She smiled.

He nodded, and gulped. "Doesn't it?" eagerly.

"Of what a fool I was!" she laughed, sighing.

His eyes were on the chased silver teapot.

"You weren't a fool," soberly. "I was the fool, Muriel."

"Maybe so, Brice." She was not inclined to argue it.

They drank their second cup, and their eyes met over the rims of the hotel china.

She exclaimed mirthfully:

"I asked you to live with me in a home in the country where apple trees bloomed! or in a flat up in the Bronx!"

He put down his teacup to say, "That's the way God meant men and women to live—in the country, or close to humanity."

He rose and stood before her. Tides of color came into his face.

"Muriel,"—taking no count of the conventions—"let's be simple, you and I."

Her eyes were on the amber in her cup.

"If only we could!" she sighed.

He spoke precipitantly. "I haven't forgotten— Whenever I've heard of you, drifting, remaining single, sighing away your soul, I've been stung by shame. Oh, Muriel," deeply, "I want to make up for the harm I've done you. Let me work for you with my hands. Dear, leave the happy solution to me. We'll be married, you and I. You and I!"

He was beside her, looking down at her face with an expression that was impetuous and genuine.

There played on her red mouth a curious smile and the eyes she lifted brimmed with delicate mockery.

"You aren't in earnest, are you?" she expostulated.

His answer was to draw her quickly to her feet—masculine hands trembling on her silken shoulder.

"Oh!" was all he said, studying her very lovely, rather wan face.

"Please!" She shrugged from under his hands.

He was abashed; surprised. "Don't you love me, Muriel?"

"I've loved so many men since my first party," she apologized.

She covered what might have been

an awkward gap by reaching out and patting his shoulder.

"Forget all about it, like a wise man," she suggested, tenderly.

He stared at the snowflake hand that drifted away so easily.

The color flared over his face.

"You've changed," he stammered.

Reseating herself before the tea-wagon, she hummed a line from a very old hymn,

"Change and decay in all around I see!"

Her lifting hand motioned him to be seated again.

"Do you remember—?" she began. Her manner urged him not to be angry with her. "It isn't feasible, honey; it's only a fairy tale; you wouldn't want me for a lifetime; let's talk about the little house with the wild honeysuckle—do you suppose the well with the moss-grown bucket is still there? I doubt it. I imagine the shanty has fallen to decay."

Hathaway watched her tidy the tea-wagon.

Picking up his hat, he cried, "You're not the woman I thought you! You've changed! Good-bye!"

Muriel was inclined to hang her sheened head, to call after him and beg him not to be angry—but she neither hung her head nor called him.

She only winced as the door banged behind him!

Between drooping white lids, as she sat at the tea-wagon, she saw three pictures: a dusty floor-space set out with tea-things and a handsome countenance flushed with embarrassment; a flock of wild geese against autumnal skies; Sam Montbell's cherubic smile last night at dinner—

She shrouded her eyes, acutely conscious of the flame and glitter of her rings.

Muriel eventually married Sam Montbell—and lived luxuriously ever after. When a woman doesn't wed her first love, her lasting love is so very apt to be m-o-n-e-y.

THE STRATEGIST

By Lawrence Vail

A MONTH had barely passed since he had wrung the memory of Sonia from the sponge of his affections, and Conrad was in love with her again.

"Life is full of surprises," sighed Conrad, "even the expected comes to pass."

"Last time I made love to Sonia," mused Conrad, "I came home with cold lips, tidy hair, and little appetite for life and dinner. I spent a dismal evening in my chair, stitching my sadly mangled vanity. I bear no malice towards Sonia, I alone was to blame for my defeat. I shocked her with a too genuine expression of my too genuine emotion. I carried my heart, so to speak, on my sleeve—no doubt a most indecent spectacle. I should have left it with sundry other skeletons in a corner of my closet.

"I neglected the maxims of Sir Vivian Maude, the wisest of my ancestors, a hero of the War of the Roses. If I remember rightly he lost not less than seven battles, was condemned three times to be beheaded, but was saved from death on each occasion by his agreeable manners towards the ladies of the court. 'It would be a drear calamity'—these are the words of the mistress of the Prince—for England to lose so gay and false a lover. He alone is able to compete on even terms with the skilled and piquant gentlemen of France."

"I shall never forget the advice he gave on his death bed to the dearest of his natural sons. 'If you wish to be successful in a skirmish with a cold and fair beloved, leave your heart at home

and carry a second brain under your left breast.'"

Conrad was heartened by these recollections.

"It behooves me to be honest with myself. I shall not shirk what is vexatious in my temper; I shall look it fiercely in the face. I love Sonia. I am unable to cure myself of my affection for her. There is only one manner of restoring my sentimental equilibrium. I must insinuate in her my way of feeling."

He studied his calendar and watch.

"It is Tuesday, five minutes after four; I shall go to her immediately. I have not talked or written to her for twenty-seven days. My presence must stir her in some way."

Conrad took his heart from under his left breast, wrapt it carefully in tissue paper, and laid it in the darkest recess of his closet. He then donned his most becoming carelessness, and descended the eighty-eight steps that separated his apartment from the street.

He walked slowly, devising his plan of action.

"Today I shall make ardent love to her. My voice will be thick with tears, my sentences ungrammatical with despair. I shall gaze at her with hatred; I shall carefully refrain from touching her. She may be astonished, at any rate she will be flattered.

"Tomorrow, Wednesday, I shall pursue the same tactics; I shall develop the enamoured strain. She may not be astonished, she may forget to be flattered, I think she will be more than a little bored.

"Thursday I shall be cold, composed and distant. As soon as she begins to

grow curious, I shall be brilliant. I may not amuse her with my fireworks, I shall certainly amuse myself. The afternoon will pass agreeably.

"Friday I shall be more indifferent than cold, more languid than composed. Her vanity, if I am not mistaken, shall be piqued. She will begin to fear that she is losing her empire over me; she will glance often and surreptitiously at the mirror. She will doubtless make an effort to conceal her annoyance: probably talk considerably, recite anecdotes, act the platonic comrade. I hear her telling me with words how fond she is of me, telling me with eyes and hands how indifferent she feels. I shall not touch her hands, I shall not look at her eyes, I may not even listen to her. I shall watch her feet for a movement of irritability, her mouth for a curve of pain.

"Saturday I shall be passionate for seven minutes, for the remainder of the hour I shall sulk. It shall be her day of glory: secure of the power which she holds over me, she will be genuinely gay and happy. When I take my departure she may even grow affectionate through pity of me. She may tell me with a pretty throb that she is light and frivolous, unworthy of my deep affection.

"Sunday I shall blunderingly let her suspect that my unhappiness is not entirely caused by her coldness.

"Monday I shall tell her vaguely that I am in trouble, thus confirming her blackest fears. A hundred trifling incidents will flash through her brain; she will remember how I smiled at other women, how other women smiled at me. It will be her hour of tribulation; I am sure she will acquit herself of it with skill. She will assure me

that I have no fonder and more constant friend than she, that she is ready to help me with her sympathy if I choose to confide in her, that she will ask no questions should I prefer to remain silent. I shall disappoint her by turning the topic suddenly. For two hours I shall dissert on politics and economics.

"When I leave her I shall kiss her fingers, thank her for her sympathy and kindness, promise to tell her my troubles on the morrow. But I shall not go to her on Tuesday. I shall send her roses and a letter of apologies. Wednesday I shall send her a postcard from the provinces. Friday I shall receive a letter from her, bidding me come to her at once, as there is a question she must ask me, a question of tremendous importance to us both. I shall write to her affectionately, fixing an interview for Monday at five o'clock. I shall go to her on the appointed date, at least thirty minutes after the appointed hour. She will fall into my arms, into my life, like a ripe fruit."

The conclusion of his program brought Conrad before the door of Sonia's house.

He hesitated before he rang the bell.

"If I pursue this plan," he said to himself, "on Monday, the eleventh of April, at half past five o'clock, Sonia will inevitably fall, like Newton's apple, into my arms and life. It will be very pleasant to hold her in my arms; her body is so soft, and white, and graceful. Her teeth are pretty when she laughs, her curls must be lovely when they tumble. It will undoubtedly be very pleasant to fold her in my arms. But what shall I do with her in my life? I may not love her on the eleventh of April, Monday, at half past five o'clock.



BABES IN THE WOODS

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

SHE paused at the top of the staircase. The emotions of divers on spring-boards, leading ladies on opening nights, and lumpy, be-striped young men on the day of the Big Game, crowded through her. She felt as if she should have descended to a burst of drums or to a discordant blend of gems from "Thaïs" and "Carmen." She had never been so worried about her appearance, she had never been so satisfied with it. She had been sixteen years old for six months.

"Isabelle!" called Elaine, her cousin, from the doorway of the dressing-room.

"I'm ready." She caught a slight lump of nervousness in her throat.

"I've had to send back to the house for another pair of slippers—it'll be just a minute."

Isabelle started toward the dressing-room for a last peek at a mirror, but something decided her to stand there and gaze down the stairs. They curved tantalizingly and she could just catch a glimpse of two pairs of masculine feet in the hall below.

Pump shod in uniform black they gave no hint of identity, but eagerly she wondered if one pair were attached to Stephen Palms. This young man, as yet unmet, had taken up a considerable part of her day—the first day of her arrival.

Going up in a machine from the station Elaine had volunteered, amid a rain of questions and comment, revelation and exaggeration—

"You remember Stephen Palms; well he is simply mad to see you again. He's stayed over a day from college and he's

coming tonight. He's heard so much about you—"

It had pleased her to know this. It put them on more equal terms, although she was accustomed to stage her own romances with or without a send-off.

But following her delighted tremble of anticipation came a sinking sensation which made her ask:

"How do you mean he's heard about me? What sort of things?"

Elaine smiled—she felt more or less in the capacity of a show-woman with her more exotic cousin.

"He knows you're good-looking and all that." She paused—"I guess he knows you've been kissed."

Isabelle had shuddered a bit under the fur robe. She was accustomed to be followed by this, but it never failed to arouse in her the same feeling of resentment; yet—in a strange town it was an advantage.

She was a "speed," was she? Well, let them find out! She wasn't quite-old enough to be sorry nor nearly old enough to be glad.

Out of the window Isabelle watched the high-piled snow glide by in the frosty morning. It was ever so much colder here than in Baltimore, she had not remembered; the glass of the side door was iced and the windows were shirred with snow in the corners.

Her mind played still with one subject: Did he dress like that boy there who walked so calmly down what was evidently a bustling business street, in moccasins and winter-carnival costume? How very *western*! Of course he wasn't that way; he went to college, was a freshman or something.

Really she had no distinct idea of

him. A two year back picture had not impressed her except by the big eyes, which he had probably grown up to by now.

However, in the last two weeks, when her Christmas visit to Elaine had been decided on, he had assumed the proportions of a worthy adversary. Children, the most astute of matchmakers, plot and plan quickly, and Elaine had cleverly played a correspondence sonata to Isabelle's excitable temperament. Isabelle was, and had been for some time, capable of very strong, if very transient emotions.

They drew up at a white stone building, set back from the snowy street. Mrs. Hollis greeted her warmly and her various younger cousins were produced from the corners where they skulked politely. Isabelle met them quite tactfully. At her best she allied all with whom she came in contact, except older girls and some women. All the impressions that she made were conscious. The half dozen girls she renewed acquaintance with that morning were all rather impressed—and as much by her direct personality as by her reputation.

Stephen Palms was an open subject of conversation. Evidently he was a bit light of love. He was neither popular nor unpopular. Every girl there seemed to have had an affair with him at some time or other, but no one volunteered any really useful information. He was going to "fall for her" . . .

Elaine had issued that statement to her young set and they were retailing it back to Elaine as fast as they set eyes on Isabelle. Isabelle resolved, that if necessary, she would force herself to like him—she owed it to Elaine—even though she were terribly disappointed. Elaine had painted him in such glowing colors—he was good-looking, had a "line" and was properly inconstant.

In fact, he summed up all the romance that her age and environment led her to desire. Were those his dancing shoes that "shimmied" tentatively around the soft rug below?

All impressions, and in fact all ideas,

were terribly kaleidoscopic to Isabelle. She had that curious mixture of the social and artistic temperaments, found so often in two classes, society girls and actresses. Her education, or rather her sophistication, had been absorbed from the boys who had dangled from her favor, her tact was instinctive and her capacity for love affairs was limited only by the number of boys she met. Flirt smiled from her large, black-brown eyes and figured in her intense physical magnetism.

So she waited at the head of the stairs at the Country Club that evening while slippers were fetched. Just as she was getting impatient Elaine came out of the dressing-room beaming with her accustomed good nature and high spirits, and together they descended the broad stairs while the nervous searchlight of Isabelle's mind flashed on two ideas. She was glad she had high color tonight and she wondered if he danced well.

Downstairs, in the Club's great room, the girls she had met in the afternoon surrounded her for a moment, looking unbelievably changed by the soft yellow light; then she heard Elaine's voice repeating a cycle of names and she found herself bowing to a sextet of black and white and terrible stiff figures.

The name Palms figured somewhere, but she did not place him at first. A confused and very juvenile moment of awkward backings and bumpings, and all found themselves arranged talking to the persons they least desired to.

Isabelle maneuvered herself and Duncan Collard, a freshman from Harvard with whom she had once played hopscotch, to a seat on the stairs. A reference, supposedly humorous, to the past was all she needed.

What Isabelle could do socially with one idea was remarkable. First, she repeated it rapturously in an enthusiastic contralto with a trace of a Southern accent; then she held it off at a distance and smiled at it—her wonderful smile; then she delivered it in variations and played a sort of mental catch with

it, all this in the nominal form of dialogue.

Duncan was fascinated and totally unconscious that this was being done, not for him, but for the eyes that glistened under the shining, carefully watered hair, a little to her left. As an actor even in the fullest flush of his own conscious magnetism gets a lasting impression of most of the people in the front row, so Isabelle sized up Stephen Palms. First, he was light, and from her feeling of disappointment, she knew that she had expected him to be dark and of pencil slenderness. For the rest, a faint flush and a straight romantic profile, the effect set off by a close-fitting dress suit and a silk ruffled shirt of the kind that women still delight in on men, but men were just beginning to get tired of.

Stephen was just quietly smiling.

"Don't you think so?" she said suddenly, turning to him innocent eyed.

He nodded and smiled—an expectant, waiting smile.

Then there was a stir and Elaine led the way over to their table.

Stephen struggled to her side and whispered:

"You're my dinner partner—Isabelle."

Isabelle gasped—this was rather right in line. But really she felt as if a good speech had been taken from the star and given to a minor character—she mustn't lose the leadership a bit. The dinner table glittered with laughter at the confusion of getting places and then curious eyes were turned on her, sitting near the head.

She was enjoying this immensely, and Duncan Collard was so engrossed with the added sparkle of her rising color that he forgot to pull out Elaine's chair and fell into a dim confusion. Stephen was on the other side, full of confidence and vanity, looking at her most consciously. He began directly and so did Duncan.

"I've heard a lot about you since you wore braids—"

"Wasn't it funny this afternoon—"

Both stopped.

Isabelle turned to Stephen shyly.

Her face was always enough answer for anyone, but she decided to speak.

"How—who from?"

"From everybody—for all the years since you've been away."

She blushed appropriately.

On her right, Duncan was hors-de-combat already although he hadn't quite realized it.

"I'll tell you what I remembered about you all these years," Stephen continued.

She leaned slightly toward him and looked modestly at the celery before her.

Duncan sighed—he knew Stephen and the situations that Stephen was born to handle. He turned to Elaine and asked her if she was going away to school next year.

II

ISABELLE and Stephen were distinctly not innocent, nor were they otherwise. Moreover, amateur standing had very little value in the game they were beginning—they were each playing a part that they might play for years. They had both started with good looks and excitable temperaments, and the rest was the result of certain accessible popular novels, and dressing-room conversation culled from a slightly older set.

When Isabelle's eyes, wide and innocent, proclaimed the ingénue most, Stephen was proportionately less deceived. He waited for the mask to drop off, but at the same time he did not question her right to wear it.

She, on her part, was not impressed by his studied air of blasé sophistication. She had lived in a larger city and had slightly an advantage in range. But she accepted his pose. It was one of a dozen little conventions of this kind of affair. He was aware that he was getting this particular favor now because she had been coached. He knew that he stood for merely the best thing in sight, and that he would have to improve his opportunity before he lost his advantage.

So they proceeded, with an infinite guile that would have horrified the parents of both.

After the half dozen little dinners were over the dance began.

Everything went smoothly—boys cut in on Isabelle every few feet and then squabbled in the corners with: "You might let me get more than an *inch!*" and "She didn't like it either—she told me so next time I cut in."

It was true—she told everyone so, and gave every hand a parting pressure that said, "You know that your dances are *making* my evening."

But time passed, two hours of it, and the less subtle beaux had better learn to focus their pseudo-passionate glances elsewhere, for eleven o'clock found Isabelle and Stephen sitting on a leather lounge in a little den off the reading room. She was conscious that they were a handsome pair and seemed to belong distinctly on this leather lounge while lesser lights fluttered and chattered downstairs. Boys who passed the door looked in enviously—girls who passed only laughed and frowned, and grew wise within themselves.

They had now reached a very definite stage. They had traded ages and accounts of their lives since they had met last. She had listened to much that she had heard before. He was a freshman at college and was on his class hockey team. He had learned that some of the boys she went with in Baltimore were "terrible speeds" and came to parties intoxicated—most of them were twenty or so, and drove alluring Stutzes. A good half of them seemed to have flunked out of various boarding schools and colleges, but some of them bore sporting names that made him look at her admiringly.

As a matter of fact, Isabelle's closer acquaintance with the colleges was chiefly through older cousins. She had bowing acquaintances with a lot of young men who thought she was "a pretty kid" and "worth keeping an eye on." But Isabelle strung the names into a fabrication of gaiety that would have dazzled a Viennese nobleman.

Such is the power of young contralto voices on leather sofas.

I have said that they had reached a very definite stage—nay more, a very critical stage. Stephen had stayed over a day to see her and his train left at twelve-eighteen that night. His trunk and suitcase awaited him at the station and his watch was already beginning to hang heavy in his pocket.

"Isabelle," he said suddenly, "I want to tell you something."

They had been talking lightly about "that funny look in her eyes," and on the relative attractions of dancing and sitting out, and Isabelle knew from the change in his manner exactly what was coming—indeed, she had been wondering how soon it would come.

Stephen reached above their heads and turned out the electric light, so they were in the dark except for the glow from the red lamps that fell through the door from the reading-room. Then he began:

"I don't know—I don't know whether or not you know what you—what I'm going to say. Lordy, Isabelle—this sounds like a line, but it isn't."

"I know," said Isabelle softly.

"We may never meet again like this—I have darned hard luck sometimes."

He was leaning away from her on the other arm of the lounge, but she could see his black eyes plainly in the dark.

"You'll see me again—silly." There was just the slightest emphasis on the last word—so that it became almost a term of endearment.

He continued a bit huskily:

"I've fallen for a lot of people—girls—and I guess you have, too—boys, I mean—but honestly you—" He broke off suddenly and leaned forward, chin on his hands, a favorite and studied gesture. "Oh, what's the use? You'll go your way and I suppose I'll go mine."

Silence for a moment. Isabelle was quite stirred—she wound her handkerchief into a tight ball and by the faint light that streamed over her, dropped it deliberately on the floor. Their hands touched for an instant, but neither

spoke. Silences were becoming more frequent and more delicious. Outside another stray couple had come up and were experimenting on the piano in the next room. After the usual preliminary of "chopsticks," one of them started "Babes in the Woods" and a light tenor carried the words into the den—

*"Give me your hand,
I'll understand,
We're off to slumberland."*

Isabelle hummed it softly and trembled as she felt Stephen's hand close over hers.

"Isabelle," he whispered, "you know I'm mad about you. You *do* give a darn about me?"

"Yes."

"How much do you care—do you like anyone better?"

"No." He could scarcely hear her, although he bent so near that he felt her breath against his cheek.

"Isabelle, I'm going back to college for six long months and why shouldn't we—if I could only just have one thing to remember you by—"

"Close the door."

Her voice had just stirred so that he half wondered whether she had spoken at all.

As he swung the door softly shut, the music seemed quivering just outside.

*"Moonlight is bright,
Kiss me good night."*

What a wonderful song, she thought—everything was wonderful tonight, most of all this romantic scene in the den with their hands clinging and the inevitable looming charmingly close.

The future vista of her life seemed an unending succession of scenes like this, under moonlight and pale starlight, and in the backs of warm limousines and in low, cosy roadsters stopped under sheltering trees—only the boy might change, and this one was so nice.

"Isabelle!"

His whisper blended in the music and they seemed to float nearer together.

Her breath came faster.

"Can't I kiss you, Isabelle?"

Lips half parted, she turned her head to him in the dark.

Suddenly the ring of voices, the sound of running footsteps surged toward them.

Like a flash Stephen reached up and turned on the light and when the door opened and three boys, the wrathful and dance-craving Duncan among them, rushed in, he was turning over the magazines on the table, while she sat without moving, serene and unembarrassed, and even greeted them with a welcoming smile. But her heart was beating wildly and she felt somehow as if she had been deprived.

It was evidently over. There was a clamor for a dance, there was a glance that passed between them, on his side despair, on hers regret, and then the evening went on, with the reassured beaux and the eternal cutting in.

At quarter to twelve Stephen shook hands with her gravely, in a small crowd assembled to wish him good-speed.

For an instant he lost his poise and she felt slightly unnecessary, when a satirical voice from a concealed wit on the edge of the company cried:

"Take her outside, Stephen."

As he took her hand he pressed it a little and she returned the pressure as she had done to twenty hands that evening—that was all.

At two o'clock, back at Hollis', Elaine asked her if she and Stephen had had a "time" in the den. Isabelle turned to her quietly. In her eyes was the light of the idealist, the inviolate dreamer of Joan-like dreams.

"No!" she answered. "I don't do that sort of thing any more—he asked me to, but I said 'No.'"

As she crept into bed she wondered what he'd say in his special delivery tomorrow. He had such a good-looking mouth—would she ever—?

"Fourteen angels were watching o'er them," sang Elaine sleepily from the next room.

"Damn!" muttered Isabelle as she explored the cold sheets cautiously, "Damn!"

THE DAMNED

By Kathryn White Ryan

THEY said of him: "Poor fellow! He deserved what he got, but then!—Divorce, obloquy, exile, obliteration!—Life must be hell for him now. After all his splendour, his successes!"

But he, strolling by day along unshadowed shores, the ocean and sky his companions, would murmur: "Ah, how good! How good! The reprieve of this quiet epilogue! They think they blighted me, but they have given me a dispensation, a mental luxury few mortals have known. . . . The others—they strive and wrangle and act to the last, but now for years I have lived without the disturbance, without the discord, without the dismay of action. . . . I have Life—clear, un-used

Life—free of decisions, of responsibilities."

And at night, the sea crooning, and palms like soothing hands rubbing along the walls; with nerves slackened, the buzz of the machinery of the world stilled, candles flickering, a man-servant bearing away the silver coffee-tray, he would bask in memories. He would listen to misty voices of obsequious men; he would feel shadow-touches of velvet arms. He would think: "How truly successful I was! What does it matter to have failed? Failure was accomplished in a day, but there was a lifetime of success before it. Besides, Failure was the one sensation I had not known—and, and—Failure is very interesting!"



I AM HOUSED AND WARM

By Mary Carolyn Davies

I AM housed and warm.
But out beyond, my lover
Is in the wind and cold,
And stars are his cover.

He sleeps alone, his arm
Beneath his head. And I
Lie in this quiet room
Watching my life go by.



ALONG THE POTOMAC

By C. Farley Anderson

I

Washington, Tuesday.

EMERGING from the grandiose Union Station, the eye of the visitor to this capital of a great republic falls upon a frowzy sand-lot, then upon a couple of glorified cigar-box hotels, and then upon all that is mortal of the Billy Sunday tabernacle. Beyond, to the right, is a whole village of harsh and graceless concrete boarding-houses for government clerks—a sprawling monument to the incomparable rapacity of Washington landlords. They were finished just in time to go to the scrap heap; as the painters and plumbers left, the war clerks were all passing on their way to the Union Station and their far-flung homes. Beyond them, like some trivial afterthought, rises the fine dome of the Capitol, with the marble flood of the Senate Office Building just before it.

The scene is typical and searchingly revelatory of this least self-respecting of capitals. Up to a year ago—and maybe yet: I forgot to notice on my way in—the entrance to the Senate Office Building on the Delaware avenue side, was by a pair of wooden stairs suggesting the Odd Fellows' Hall above the Niagara Hose-House in an eighth-rate country town. And all along Pennsylvania avenue, between Capitol Hill and the White House, there is a double row of Greek fruit stores, dead-and-alive groceries, fly-blown book stalls and Chinese yokami joints.

Horror succeeds horror from end to end of this grandiloquent thoroughfare, the Nevsky Prospect, Unter den Linden and Calle Mayor of the nation. Begin-

ning superbly with the mountainous pile of the Capitol, perhaps the finest legislative building in the world, and ending decently upon the harmonious note of the Treasury and the White House, it runs the whole gamut of architectural cacophony between. What barbarian, one wonders, conceived and erected that frightful building for the Postoffice at Eleventh street? And who then topped it with the District Building? And who topped the District Building with the Southern Railway Building?—a brick stable set beside an overgrown tombstone.

II

Wednesday.

EVERYWHERE the same disharmony, the same almost incredible lack of elementary taste. In front of the Capitol, across the fine plaza on its east side, is a fountain in red granite, surely the most hideous stone ever quarried by man. Directly beyond, set like a boil between the Capitol and the House Office Building, is the florid excrescence of the Library of Congress, the most overestimated public building, I dare say, in all Christendom.

I say overestimated because there seems to be a general conspiracy to call it lovely, and that conspiracy has apparently bagged the yokelery of the republic. One never approaches it without encountering groups of backwoods tourists outside, painfully admiring its dirty yellow-gray color, its flashes of absurd pink, its tinselly and imbecile dome. And one never enters without finding the same docile patriots, stockstill and spell-bound before the paltry chromos on the walls. A series of bathrooms with insurance calendars made into

friezes. Nothing worse is in the Vatican.

What a conscientious architect might say of the corn-fed Corinthian of the Capitol I don't know; it was built by engineers, military men, amateurs, not by professors of the orders. But the proof of the pudding, after all, is in the eating. Theory forgotten, the thing fills the eye and the imagination. It is dignified, impressive, unmistakably grand. It dominates Washington as clearly as the Acropolis dominated Athens. And there, directly in front of it, stands its exquisite burlesque. What could be more cunningly chosen than all that pseudo-Italian Renaissance gingerbread to poke fun at its honest country-courthouse Corinthian? What could flout it, and upset it, and spit into its eye more effectively?

III

Thursday.

BUT if I revile the Library of Congress (perhaps ignorantly) let me make haste to add that I stop at the building, and do not extend my mirth to the actual collection of books. That collection, on the contrary, fills me with a degree of respect verging upon downright awe: it is one of the most underestimated possessions of the American people, as the library building is one of the most overestimated. I find in books, almost every day, kind words for this library or that—the libraries of the universities, that of the Surgeon-General of the Army, the Chicago and Boston libraries, the New York Public Library—but seldom a word for the Library of Congress. Scholars seem to use it very little; the majority of persons I meet in its reading-room are plainly mere idlers—lovers whispering behind folios, ancient wrecks of office-seekers, blackamoors grandly conscious of their rights and dignities.

And yet it is one of the largest and most comprehensive libraries in the world, and is fast overhauling and surpassing all others. Give a glance to its card catalogue and you will be surprised; in a hundred useful ways it is

already the full peer of the British Museum; in a dozen ways it is already far ahead. Moreover, it is more usable. The books in it are easy to locate; they are brought promptly; the personnel is polite and helpful. The long waits of the New York Public Library are unheard of. The imbecile system of watching for a number to flash on a dial—there is none of this. Instead the reader finds his books on his desk and is treated as a guest.

I recommend this great collection to all persons seeking wisdom. It is a pleasant work-place. True enough, the man accustomed to civilized surroundings could not possibly stay long in Washington, even to gain wisdom, but there is no actual need to do so. Live in Baltimore, forty miles away, and commute daily—by fast expresses, forty-five minutes; at most, an hour. From the station to the library is but five minutes' walk; one need not enter Washington at all.

IV

Friday.

ALWAYS cheap, tawdry, vulgar, frowsy and disgusting, prohibition has made Washington virtually impossible; only the money they are wallowing in holds the crowds now here. Years ago there was capital eating; some of the old-time restaurants, in fact, were famous from end to end of the land. But I can't recall a first-rate meal in the town for fifteen years past. Up to the time it went dry, of course, one could wash down bad victuals with what came out of bottles. At one small restaurant there was very good draft ale; at another there was a bartender, Mike by name, who made decent cocktails when wind and tide were favorable; on a hotel roof there was quasi-Pilsner that greeted the pylorus with a heavenly buss.

But no more. Imagine the capital of a great nation on the rations of diabetics, chautauqua orators and prisoners in the penitentiaries! What must the diplomats here interned think of it—the Latin-Americans, the French and

Russians, the Spanish ambassador? I should like to hear the last-named on the subject, behind closed doors in his sub-cellar. Or the young bucks of the British Embassy.

V

Saturday.

BEHIND the door, of course, drinks are to be had—chiefly very bad whiskey at a dollar a half-pint. Until the lid was clamped down, a few months ago, every train from Baltimore was loaded with darkies running jugs, and every black kitchen wench in town had a lover who brought in the family supply. When the police began searching train passengers, the darkeys took to automobiles, and for months the Baltimore road was crowded with jug-laden Fords all day. Innumerable and incredible accidents marked this traffic. Every boot-legger, before leaving Baltimore, would sample his cargo, and so it was not uncommon for him to smash his Ford into a telegraph pole on the way, or to run up a bank, or go over a bridge-rail, or run down a yokel. But now the traffic diminishes, and the caravan of Fords is no more. Day by day, one pays more for a drink, and gets worse liquor. Trade goods that even a New York policeman would sniff at are here sold to millionaires and great officers of state at the normal cost of 100-year-old brandy. Everyone is full of synthetic red-eye. The town reeks of bad whisky.

Nowhere in America, indeed, is the swinishness of prohibition more apparent. Washington has become an eighth-rate country town, hoggish and hypocritical. One is nauseated by the atmosphere. It is as if one were sent back to school again, and caned for shooting spit-balls by a chalky Peck-

sniff in a long-tailed coat. The man who cherishes his self-respect sends for a time-table and packs his valise. It is not a place to linger in, but to get out of.

VI

Sunday.

FIVE or six years ago the town enjoyed another and worse uplifting. That time it was the vice crusaders who performed the purification—with the usual effects. Theoretically the town is one vast Christian Endeavor meeting; actually it is the most libidinous that I know. Nowhere else within my knowledge, in truth, is there a more ardent pursuit of the poor working girl. Go into the eating-rooms of any hotel in town and you will find fifty oldish fellows making heavy love to fifty cuties. Or, if you can't stand the food, you must eat to pay rent, go to the Speedway after dark. Or into Rock Creek Park. Or out into Maryland.

Alas, most of the fair ones thus wooed to their foul disaster are anything but fair in actuality. Not even Philadelphia has more ugly women. I walk along the streets for blocks, searching in vain for a pretty face. The war-work seems to have brought in the hopeless and embittered old maids of the whole country; one sees thousands of faded frumps in the lunchrooms. They have worked very hard and the climate is atrocious—no wonder they look yellow and anemic. But even in the wealthy neighborhoods, where war work was surely not burdensome, female pulchritude is rare.

Nay, the seeker after beauty had better not come here. It is the wrong address. The town itself will torture him with nightmares. The gals will send him leaping to a monastery. Be warned! Stay away!



SYSTEM

By Jameson Andrews

THE beautiful woman in black strolled across the terrace.

* * *

Two men admired the beautiful woman in black.

One said to his wife: "My mind is troubled by business worries; it is stifling inside; I do not feel well. I shall stroll across the terrace."

The other gazed upon his wife passionately, eyes flashing.

"Dearest," he breathed, "the fragrance of your hair dizzies me; your lips burn mine. I must leave your presence before I become wholly mad."

* * *

The beautiful woman in black strolled across the terrace—



PILGRIMAGE

By Charles Divine

THE streets and I, companions,
Go where the faces fade,
And bells ring out at midnight
And stars are unafraid.

The flicker of a gas jet
Has made a sinner saint,
But which of all the street lamps
Will show your shadow faint?

I look in lighted windows,
I watch the lattice gleam,
And under dusky arches—
As if they housed a dream.

For mystery's a timepiece,
A heart can wheedle fate,
I hasten at the corners . . .
And wonder if I'm late.



THE LITTLE TICKET COLLECTOR

By T. E. Mount

SHE was clothed entirely, so far as one could see, in some sort of huge ulster or cloak of a dirty brown color and sadly faded and frayed. Her shoes were of that nondescript sort which is apparently indigenous to shop girls and others who are much on their feet—of soft black leather, dull and shapeless and comfortable. All day she sat or stood at the machine, whose insatiable mouth never tired of swallowing tickets, and watched the people hurry by to catch the trains. No one noticed her.

They were all too much in a hurry, and besides in her brown coat—like those birds who change their brilliant-colored coats at some seasons of the year to soft and neutral tints for better protection—she seemed to blend into and become part of the drab platform which stood ever behind her like a floor of wintry grass which would never grow green with Spring.

But she saw many people of many sorts and her eyes had become keen in the little signs which whisper their tales of occupations and habits. This young man, for instance, was different. For one thing he seemed actually happy, and he whistled softly to himself with a gay light in his eye as he walked up and down the platform waiting for his train. By this she knew he was new to New York, for your hardened denizen of the city takes his happy moments seriously and does not unburden himself by whistling happy little tunes on the platform of the "L." Moreover, though he may very well be happy, he is never gay. He wouldn't know how to be if he wanted to.

The little ticket collector watched the

young man and she thought that he was very handsome. Her heart jumped and her smile was shy when she saw that he had come over and meant to ask her a question.

"There are so many trains," he said. "I want to get to Columbus Avenue and Seventy-ninth Street."

"You take the Harlem train and get off at Eighty-first Street; then walk back two blocks," she found herself answering him in quite a businesslike way.

He thanked her and turned away.

When he had gone she began to think of her life, of what it had been and of what it might yet be if she took any one of the various roads which are ever open to a woman.

She was the daughter of a carpenter who had had difficulty in making his very liberal wages suffice for a family of six and the customary Saturday night drunk. Saturday nights were his reward for working every day with his hands without any real hope of arriving at a stage of existence in which he would do otherwise than work hard with his hands each week after a Saturday night drunk. He had been an unreflective man and he did not save or carry insurance, but he was not a shirker, and, having married casually, he accepted the inevitable offspring of that marriage philosophically and made an honest attempt to support and educate them. Being an unreflective man, he died without an estate and his four daughters supported their mother.

This little ticket collector was the eldest of the four and she had had little time for romantic affairs. Besides, she was not of the sort that is attractive to men, being neither pretty nor possessed

of those little graces and artifices which enable the unbeautiful of the sex to engage in the contest for love and a flat to care for. She had had one suitor, to be sure, but she had not liked him even enough to consider his somewhat doubtful qualities as a provider.

Now her mother was dead and she had a little more money to spend on herself, but life had resolved itself into a hopeless round of days behind that greedy ticket machine and lusterless nights in her little skylight room. She was twenty-five and she wondered if fifty was to find her behind that rapacious machine, unnoticed, watching the faces of the people who hurried past her, or gazing at the high stars from the little iron bed of some other skylight room.

Men, she reflected, sometimes looked at her with glances not wholly impersonal, but these men were usually gross of feature and evil of eye, such as seemed to see in a woman but one possibility and therefore overlooked her general unattractiveness.

From these men she shrank as a house-reared kitten might shrink from the filth and corruption of a back-street gutter.

And suddenly she was possessed of a wish that she had jumped up and held on to that young man with the clean face and the gay smile and begged him to share some little bit of his happiness with her. But the young man had gone and she sat very still, with queer, desperate thoughts running through her head, and for a long time she did not know whether the people dropped their tickets into the machine or not.

But the young man in question continued to be happy, for he did not know of the thoughts in the mind of the ticket collector and he had just gotten a new job which made it possible for the Girl and himself to be married.

He had only been in New York a few months and the days had seemed very long. That morning he had stolen an hour of the firm's time to write to his longed-for betrothed. Now it was merely a question of a week or so

until she would meet him in New York, accompanied doubtless by solicitous parents, to be married. His happiness was therefore excusable.

But for some reason, as he took his seat in the car, he thought of the little ticket collector and remembered the wistful look in her eyes which belied the cool, brisk tones of her answer to his question. It occurred to him that she might not be very happy, sitting all day watching the tickets disappear into her machine.

"Hell of a job," he commented to himself.

He wondered what such girls did for amusement. Come to that, he hadn't done much in the way of amusement himself these last few months, and here he was on his lucky day without anyone to help him celebrate.

It occurred to him that the girl at the ticket machine would probably be very glad to help. The thought grew on him, and a moment later he was off and waiting for a down-town train. Certainly she was homely enough so that even his girl wouldn't mind, he reflected.

The little ticket collector's heart jumped when she saw him coming up the steps and began to beat so fast that it seemed as though she could scarcely get her breath.

When he leaned over and told her that he hoped she wouldn't think he was fresh, that he was wishing for someone to celebrate with him that evening because he had just gotten a new job, and that she had looked as though she might be a little lonesome, too, and so forth and so forth, the ticket collector managed to say breathlessly that she would meet him in the lobby of the theater and managed not to add "or anywhere else on earth."

So the young man went whistling away while she sat amidst whirling balls of fire that hid the drab platform and whisked her away to long rows of beautiful theater lobbies, all of which contained a most wonderful-looking young man with the gayest of smiles on his face.

II

THAT evening she hurried home from work so as to be the first to use the boarding-house bathtub, for some half-realized, half-formed purpose urged her to make herself very clean, as a bride does on the day of her wedding.

After bathing she dressed herself with tremulous care and, scarcely stopping to eat the greasy evening meal of the boarding house hurried to the theater. She did not intend to be late on this evening of evenings.

At the theater she thrilled to the occasional touch of his elbow and thought little or nothing of the play. But she saw that the women in the cast wore beautiful soft clothes and even the oldest and ugliest of them seemed well-fed and plump enough.

After the play the young man had a reckless moment and suggested that they go to a cabaret and have supper. Here the ticket collector saw more women, all apparently finely dressed and laughing merrily with their men companions. She knew by report, and by that sixth sense which all women possess, what sort they were.

Some of them had hard lines in their faces, but they were usually the older ones. She reflected that the lines in their faces were no harder and their eyes no more hopeless than those of old Mrs. Simpson, who had been deserted by her husband and who had lived in solitary virtue ever since, supporting herself by taking in washing; nor than those of that Mrs. Elkins who spent her time sewing for other people and protecting herself and her children from the drunken assaults of Elkins on the occasions of his infrequent visits to his family. Nor did she see anyone who looked half so wicked and grasping as that Italian woman whose husband kept the corner store or as the hard-faced, faithful wife of old Sol, the pawnbroker, who wore so many diamonds and seemed always to be hoping that Sol would be able to wring another out of some poor person who owed him.

She noticed also that, although not

all of these women looked happy even in the forced gayety of the cabaret, yet almost without exception they looked as if they had had enough to eat, and no one looked at all like poor little Miss Etheridge, who was so scrawny and thin and always so afraid of being taken sick and losing her work.

A sudden resolve came to her and when she looked again at her young man the little light which had flickered and lain fallow in her eyes ever since he had first spoken to her looked boldly out as if it had at last made up its mind to stay.

The young man did not notice it. He was intrigued with the cabaret, an event not very frequent in his own hard-working life.

He was inspired to order a cocktail, humorously offering one to her. She accepted without hesitation. It was her first, and she disliked the taste, so she swallowed it all at once in order to get rid of it. The warm, tingling sensation which followed delighted her and in that glow the little light in her eyes grew stronger.

She felt suddenly as though she had grown somewhat larger, had expanded so that the little hollows in her neck had filled out and her bodice fitted a little more closely. A glance in the big mirror behind her showed that her eyes were bright and her cheeks held a becoming flush—almost as though she had painted like the women around her.

She stared straight before her and scarcely heard, or heard only through a haze, her companion's comments on the cabaret show which was just commencing. That warm, tingling sensation still ran through her veins and she seemed all at once to be possessed of a languorous grace. Her body felt as though it were all full of soft curves. She wanted to go out and dance easily and swiftly with the scantily clad dancer who held the floor.

But her companion bethought himself of his new job and the necessity of a clear head for the morrow and took her off.

Going to her home on the elevated

she was still silent, for she was thinking of the morning and the drab platform and the greedy mouth of her ticket machine and of the many other tomorrows which would follow. She shivered slightly.

"Cold?" he asked.

She answered "Yes," and as they got off the cars she put her arm through his and walked quite close to him. It made him a little uncomfortable. He had not told her of The Girl and he wanted to be loyal. He thought how fine it would be when he and She could walk home thus, she on his arm, to their apartment.

Arrived at her boarding house they stood for a moment in the darkness of the doorway while the ticket collector pretended to try to get the key in the lock. The young man waited cheerfully for a moment and then suggested that he might be able to manage it better than she.

Seeing that he had every intention of opening the door for her and leaving her with merely a word of good night, she was forced to abandon this little subterfuge. She meant to be very diplomatic about making him stay, but suddenly the thought of the morning, and the nearness of his smile, and that little tingly feeling that had been around her heart all evening, surged up in her so that she came close to him and catching him by the lapels of his coat whis-

pered up to him in a little choky voice, "Don't go and leave me now—I-I want you to stay—a-a long time—I-I—"

Then in a burst of desperation as she felt him drawing back from her, "Oh, take me away from this place! Please, please! I want to go away with you!"

The young man was amazed. He had not counted on this. His heart skipped a beat and something savage took possession of him so that he felt very much like a beast who finds his kill unexpectedly helpless before him and hesitates a moment, delighting in its very helplessness, before he strikes. But he fought this feeling down and pretended to misunderstand, saying, "There, there, you're only a little frightened. You'll be all right in a moment."

She came closer to him still and made it so plain that he could not fail to understand, and because of his girl and the queer savage feeling in his throat he broke away from her and hurried down the street with his chin on his breast. He thought of his love and he felt soiled.

When he had gone the little ticket collector leaned against the door and sobbed. Later she went upstairs and lay in her little bed, looking at the stars which seemed to form for her the image of that insatiable machine of the morrow which would swallow the tickets so greedily, and her heart was hot and bitter.



WOMEN cease to be interesting when they become supremely happy or supremely unhappy.



MARRIAGE simply makes it more difficult for a woman to meet congenial company.



AN ENGAGED GIRL

By Thyra Samter Winslow

SHE was a little thing, with soft brown hair that fell in seeming carelessness too near her eyes. She was always brushing it back with a quaint, helpless, half-embarrassed little smile. She wore her hair low because her forehead was high, and it made her look ten years older to show it. She had a way of smiling, as if exceedingly interested, and she could listen quite well, never interrupting, but punctuating the conversation at the right times with eager little nods.

She was slender, with thin shoulders, quite fragile-looking. She had a way of standing very close to the person she was with and shrugging one shoulder rather sensuously—she could make the movement seem unconscious. She wore rather thin Georgette waists, usually, over fancy pink silk camisoles, trimmed with lace and bits of ribbon. She used cheap perfume rather sparingly and was not very careful about her shoes—her foot was small and she wore French-heeled affairs of inexpensive leather that always looked a bit grey.

She left the Subway station at Times Square and hurried to keep her appointment with Eric Black. The only times she ever hurried were when she went to keep appointments with men, and even then she was always late, spending too much time musing or miscalculating the time it would take her to get ready.

She had been "going with" Eric for about six months and they had been engaged nearly that long. She saw to that. She was just twenty, but she had been "engaged" twice before, first to Fred Howard, with whom she had quarrelled—she had got tired of him before the quarrel—then to Joe Benham, who

proved too stingy to show a girl a good time.

Milly liked being engaged. One of her codes was that the right sort of girl doesn't let a man kiss her until they are engaged. She was very careful that men should "respect" her and think her "a lady." She often told them so. She would introduce into her conversation such things as "But I didn't answer her, I tried to be a lady," and "It doesn't seem to me a lady would do that."

She lived in a little apartment with her father and mother and three younger brothers in One Hundred and Thirty-first Street. Her father and all of her brothers held various insignificant positions and received sufficiently large salaries to support the family in a meager sort of comfort. Her mother was a decent, though untidy, housekeeper.

Milly thought herself above the class of girls who "had to work," though she had thought, a number of times, of going on the stage—or in the movies. There was really nothing useful she was capable of doing and she hadn't quite enough ambition or energy to pursue her fancies concerning a career.

Now she adjusted her small, rather trim hat, pulling it a bit further over her eyes. Still hurrying up the street, she took from her large gaudily beaded purse a small silver-plated puff-box, rearranged a strand of hair, powdered her nose. Eric had never seen her without her nose being quite powdery. To have suggested it would have seemed, to Milly, an indiscretion.

She was awfully fond of Eric, quite in love with him, in fact, more than she had ever been in love with Fred or Joe. In her mind she had planned their mar-

riage a hundred times. She intended to see that it took place soon now. She hated long engagements. Anything might happen. She liked Eric. He fitted into her scheme—dependable, affectionate, plain, understandable. He was good-looking, too. He knew how to spend money, though he was apt to get stingy spells, once in a while, and talk about saving up.

Oh, well, maybe that was all right. When they were married it would be good to know he was the saving, domestic sort, not one who would "hold out on her." She liked to know how much money the man she was going with made and what his prospects were. It was quite time she was getting married, settling down—she was still young—could get lots of fellows, of course—but three girls she had gone with were married—no use waiting too long. . . .

Eric was getting forty dollars a week and now that his younger brother was working he didn't have to help his mother and could leave home. She certainly wouldn't have married him and lived with his mother—a funny old lady. Imagine living with a funny old lady who would always be asking questions and maybe say something if you used rouge—and you'd have to help her with the housework and be neat and orderly about things. . . .

Now Eric could get away from his mother all right. He'd told her that. Forty dollars was enough money to get along with, to start—she wished she knew men who were making more—a lot of money, not just a salary. . . . Still, if Eric got a raise that would show that he was going in the right direction—he was awfully good-looking—she knew other girls envied her.

She reached the drug store at Broadway and Forty-third Street, where she was to have met Eric at half-past six, at a minute or two past seven. She saw him standing in front of the drug store, near the door, watching for her. He hurried toward her.

"Hel-lo," she called, sprightly, holding out her hand to him. "Now don't be a baddy and scold me for being late.

I hurried and hurried and hurried. I just missed one car and there was a block in the Subway that lasted over ten minutes. I'm not so dreadfully late."

She held up her wrist for him to see—he had given her the wrist watch on her birthday.

She noticed, then, that Eric looked different—pleasantly excited.

"What's the matter?" she asked, hurriedly.

He looked down at her affectionately. He was a big fellow, rather heavily built, with thick eyebrows and quite a firm chin.

"Something good. Guess?"

"How can I guess? A raise? Did you get a raise, Eric?"

She patted her hands together, in simulated excitement. "Did you? Is that it?"

"Not quite. Pretty nearly, though. Let's get out of this crowd and get something to eat."

With one arm at her elbow he piloted her through the group waiting at the drug store.

"What do you say to Goletti's? Feel like spaghetti tonight, Milly?"

"That sounds great, only hurry up and tell me. I'm so excited."

"Lots of time."

He piloted her up Broadway, holding her arm close. They became part of the colorful, flowing crowd. Goletti's was in Forty-seventh Street.

Then:

"Say, Milly, how'd you like to live in Kansas City?"

"Kansas City! What a funny question! Why?"

Milly had been out of New York only twice and neither trip had pierced west of the seemingly impassable Palisades. New York, she felt, was the world. Weren't all newspapers in New York, weren't all magazines in New York—and theaters and cafés? Did anyone go outside of New York but traveling men and road shows? Away from New York people lived in little hick towns, or fairly big hick towns, and didn't know what was going on at

all. Why, if you lived outside of New York you were a rube and wore funny clothes and looked up at the tall buildings when you came to town and they made jokes about you at the Palace.

"Why? What did you ask about Kansas City for?" she asked.

"Oh, nothing," Eric smiled, held her a bit closer, "nothing, only, well, I'm—I'm going there—Monday—Monday morning—assistant branch manager. There were a lot of changes at the office today, and Kansas City needs an assistant and I understand the business—ought to, when you start in a place when you're fourteen, and so when . . ."

"Will it mean more money?"

"They didn't say anything about that today and of course I didn't ask. Not right away, I guess, but if I make good there's not a question. Of course I'll get more, then. Why, some of the men in our branches are making four thousand a year. There's Cabell in Denver . . ."

Milly smiled and nodded at the right times. Kansas City—and all of her friends lived in New York—Kansas City, a little Western town—why, maybe it wasn't even—modern! Of course they didn't have apartments there—you'd probably have to live in a whole house and take care of it and heat water in a kettle—lots of housework—and all of her dreams had been of New York.

Still—it might be pleasant, getting married right away—a lot of excitement and buying clothes. Under the circumstances, she could even let Eric help pay for the trousseau, it wasn't quite "ladylike," but she didn't have much money saved and everything was so high. But, at that, her father usually had a little put away and her mother was always able to keep out something from the household fund that Milly could manage to get when she tried. Under the circumstances . . . yes, her money and from her father and mother and the boys and Eric—and Uncle Lou and Aunt Sophie might give her money for clothes instead of a regular wedding present—she might get fixed up all right—a pretty suit for traveling and

some waists and a couple of good-looking dresses to wear in the evening—and hats. You probably couldn't get a thing worth wearing in Kansas City—she'd show them how to dress—they'd know she was a New Yorker out there as soon as they saw her, of course, and look to her to tell them what was new in New York, all about styles . . .

II

THEY reached Goletti's and found a table near the wall, one of twenty little tables just alike, ornamented with catsup and catsup stains, salt that wouldn't shake at all and pepper that shook too freely, when there was any in the shaker, a glass jar of soft green pieces called pickles, damp, unstarched napkins.

There was a "good crowd" in Goletti's, as always, the tables full of the oddly assorted couples one sees in a seventy-five-cent table d'hôte restaurant, varied with little groups of four, eagerly crunching their food and speaking above the clatter of the dishes in the hoarse, unnatural tones of the cheap restaurant frequenter. Milly and Eric were soon eating their soup, a thick substance, full of pieces of tomato, Italian paste and beans.

Eric finished his story and Milly gathered together the ends of it.

" . . . so, when the boss said, 'Black, the job's yours, if you can make good,' you can imagine how glad I was. It's a big thing for me. Why, if I make good, in a year or two . . ."

After all, getting married quickly, telling everybody good-bye, a reception, maybe, the excitement of getting new clothes, of travelling, mightn't be such a bad thing after all. Even Kansas City for a while—the wife of the assistant manager . . .

"Will you have to stay out there, all the time?" she asked.

"Why, I suppose so. That's the plan. I might work up to be manager, though, in time, and they say Kansas City is a crackjack town. I'll be kind of glad to get out of this—subway rides

twice a day and all the noise and everything. I can get farther ahead out there, and they say you can live cheaper, too, and Mr. Lefton said, after I was there a while . . ."

"You're really going?"

"Surest thing you know. Leave Monday."

"Monday! Why, Eric!! Milly looked up, softly smiling, brushed her hair away from her face, dropped her eyes.

"That's the part I don't like—Monday's so near. Just think, today's Friday and nearly over, only Saturday and Sunday left."

"Well, that's long enough for me to get ready—and say good-bye. And pretty soon, not very long, either, I'll—I'll come and get you or send for you, Milly. Would you come out there, way out to Kansas City to marry me?"

"But—but, Eric, I'd be so awfully lonely here alone. I—I tell you what would be great. Why—" she burst into a sudden smile as if she had just thought of it, "wouldn't it be perfectly splendid, wonderful—if—if we could get married right away, tomorrow or Monday—and go to Kansas City on our honeymoon! I could get the few things I need to wear, tomorrow—and then we needn't be separated at all. A new man, when he's married, gets a lot more respect from girls in the office, people like that . . ."

She put one hand across the table, withdrew it a little, as if hesitating.

Eric put his hand over hers, patted it.

"It sounds great, girlie. Nothing I'd like better, but I'm afraid it can't be done."

"I'd like to know why not?"

"I've got to make good first, honey. Don't you see? It's better that way. Today, when the boss asked me if I was married, I told him about you, us being engaged, and he said, 'Just as well, no social stunts till you get broken in.' There'll be a lot of night work there, for a while—they are overworked now, that's why they are adding an assistant—and alone, in a strange town in the evening wouldn't be any fun for you. After a while, when I'm making

good—and you can just bet I will make good with a girl like you to work for—"

"When you're making good? How long?"

A sudden change came over Milly.

Unconsciously she withdrew her hand, let it lay idle in her lap.

"Why, not long, within a year, sure. Maybe six months, even—if things went all right. Say, wouldn't I feel like a fool, marrying a girl and taking her away from her home to a strange city and then not make good. . . . Say, I'd never get over that, in the world. But you just wait. Six months will pass in no time and then . . ."

Six months!

By his voice Milly knew that he meant it. She knew Eric pretty well. She knew what heavy eyebrows and a firm mouth and a determined chin meant. Too often, he'd made up his mind about things—and never changed.

She knew that he cared for her but that he wouldn't give in—give up going to Kansas City or marry her right away. Sometimes she could "work" him into altering his opinions, with little coaxings, but not when he stuck out his jaw, looked like that . . .

Six months . . . six months of being alone in New York . . . waiting . . . writing letters—Milly hated letter writing—staying home in the evening . . . Since she was seventeen, Milly had never been without masculine escorts. A desert of six months with no engagements of cafés. . . .

Milly knew there were girls who didn't "go with" boys. She could picture them, lank, stupid creatures, always in silly little groups with little jokes among themselves. No, Milly couldn't go with girls—she never could. She couldn't spend six months longer, unescorted, waiting. She'd be engaged and an engaged girl doesn't go with other men—her code included being loyal to a man as long as you consider yourself engaged to him. And, at the end of six months, even, maybe Eric wouldn't be ready to send for her or wouldn't succeed. Eric was stubborn. He'd probably get worse as he grew

older. Kansas City—a rube town—waiting to go there—six months of waiting. . . .

Then, suddenly, Milly knew that she would never marry Eric. She knew that all of her dreams of him for the past six months, when she had mused on their marriage, their affection, were gone. At once, she felt definitely unengaged.

Looking at Eric, across the table, with her sweetest smile, her head a bit on one side, she knew that he meant absolutely nothing to her any more. He was a stranger as far as emotions went. She knew that, after Monday, she would probably never see him again or care to see him again. She was absolutely uninterested in him.

She would be nice to him, of course. That would be the simplest, the ladylike thing to do. She would see him tomorrow and Sunday and let him talk about their—his—plans. And Monday morning she'd probably go down to the station to tell him good-bye—it would be the nice way to act—she'd take him a present, a cigarette case, maybe, or some cuff links—she'd seen some good-looking gold-plated ones in a window—and she'd write to him, at first, and then gradually break off—that would be simple enough. The days she and Eric had spent together, his kindnesses to her, the memories, caresses were wiped off, clean. The man across the table was no one she knew or cared for at all.

“. . . so you see it's best,” Eric was continuing, painstakingly. “I'll go up there and work hard and get the lay of the land, and, by the time you're ready to come, I'll be settled and know all about things. Then, if I can get a vacation, I'll come up for you, and, if not, maybe you can come out there to me. . . . anyhow, it'll all work out all right. And I can live pretty cheap out there alone and save money—and by the time . . .”

Milly gave her quick, eager little nods, smiling in pleasant agreement. She even found his hand under the table and gave it a little, quick squeeze.

Now that this affair was over—what next?

They ate sphagetti, then, and the typical tasteless dry chicken of the table d'hôte restaurant, punctuating the meal with laughter and pleasant planning.

A man came into the restaurant. He was good-looking. Not Eric's type, but good-looking, anyhow—Milly only liked good-looking men. She had been quite constant to Eric and had not flirted or even looked at other men while she had been engaged to him. It was not “ladylike” to flirt with one man when you're engaged to another. But now things were different, of course.

Eric saw the new man, too, and nodded to him. And, as Milly saw that Eric knew him, that there was a chance for an introduction, her heart gave a sudden thrill—she became a hunter at a new chase—her mind leaped ahead—a meeting, cafés—theaters—someone to go with—an engagement—caresses—marriage, even. Milly gave the stranger a long glance out of the corners of her eyes, then dropped them modestly.

“Who is that?” asked Milly, so that the stranger could see she was interested, asking about him.

“Fellow named Hood, nice fellow. He's with that new vacuum company that the Walls are interested in.”

Milly glanced at the stranger again, frankly, pleasantly, unsmiling.

“Why, for a minute I thought it was—why, he looks just exactly like a man I used to know—I never saw two people look so much alike. Hood, did you say his name was? Well, then of course it can't be the same man. Only I thought . . .”

Hood was approaching them. Goletti's was quite crowded. There were no vacant tables.

Milly smiled kindly.

“Why not ask him to come here, Eric,” she said. “The poor fellow will get no dinner here if you don't. This awful mob. We're nearly through, anyhow.”

It was a kind thing for Milly to suggest, of course. She was thoughtful. It was one of Eric's last evenings with

her and he didn't want it interfered with. Still, as Milly had said, they had nearly finished, would be going . . . He motioned to Hood to join them.

Milly acknowledged the introduction with a pleasant little laugh. She moved imperceptibly nearer Hood, as he sat down, and began teasing him in a personal, though ladylike, way about arriving so late for his dinner.

"It's a good thing you've no wife waiting for you here. Do you come to dinner at home, late, too—treat your wife this way?"

"I'm unfortunate enough not to be married," Hood told her.

Well, she knew that. She didn't like married men. It wasn't quite nice to go with them and they offered no matrimonial opportunities. Yes, he was good-looking. She liked that slender light type more than men like Eric. He wouldn't be so stubborn. He wore nice clothes and had nice finger nails. She liked his eyes, too, a funny grey. She bet he knew a lot about things—he wasn't the sort who would move to a rube town like Kansas City.

Hood told some trivial experiences of the day and Milly laughed appreciatively and nodded eagerly at well-punctuated intervals. She discovered half a dozen similarities in tastes and told him so. She shrugged the shoulder nearest him so he couldn't help seeing the alluring flesh and bits of pink ribbon under the thin waist.

Yes, Hood was a nice fellow—she knew that type—you had to humor them—they were rather brusque, the way they talked, but, when you learned how to handle them—

Milly and Eric rose to go. Milly leaned quite near Hood as she stood up. She swayed slightly as Eric helped her on with her coat, smiled, and held out a soft little hand as she said good-bye.

Eric walked ahead, to pay the check—you pay the cashier at Goletti's.

"Wait a minute," Hood called softly.

Milly had been listening for a word from him.

She turned back.

He did not rise. She did not expect it.

He leaned back in his seat.

"Your friend Black anything to you?" he asked.

"What do you mean, anything?" smiling.

"You're not his girl? Not engaged?"

"Why of course not! Just a friend. He's leaving town in a few days."

"So I heard him say. Only, I thought maybe, from something else he said—. You don't mind if I 'phone you or something?"

"I wish you would. Awfully glad to have you." She gave him her telephone number and moved away. Eric was waiting at the cashier's desk, one man still ahead of him.

"What's your hurry?" Hood called, in his quiet, rather high voice.

"Nothing. Why?"

"Why not say now when I'm going to see you?"

"When would you like to see me?"

"Say, what about having dinner with me, here, in a day or two?"

"That would be awfully nice." Quietly, demurely.

"What night?"

"Monday? All right, I'll meet you here at half-past six. That satisfy you?"

They nodded and Milly hurried to Eric, who was just paying the check.

"I hated to stand around here, being jostled by waiters and everybody, so I went back to our table," Milly explained.

Eric had not noticed her absence. He guided her, by the elbow, carefully, as they went out on the street.

". . . as I was telling you," he said, "it was the greatest surprise of my life when the boss called me in. You can imagine how I felt. I can see what a big chance it is. It'll mean a lot to both of us. And you just wait—it won't seem so long—in six months or so I'll send for you—and now, we'll have one good time until I leave on Monday . . ."

Milly encouraged him with her mechanical, sweet, little smiles and nods.

. . . Monday . . .

MY LOVES: THEIR GREATNESS AND DECLINE

By June Gibson

I

Gregory

ONLY the big things mattered to Gregory. If a woman expressed a desire for a bit of Chinese porcelain, Gregory did not scour the local bazaars for it: he journeyed to the Orient. In comparison with his own, the feasts of Croesus would have offended him by their meagerness. Petty business ventures were unknown to Gregory; he speculated with millions. He had faced shambles and murder and jungle beasts and malady unflinchingly and unhaunted by fear. One night when curtains of rain shut off one street from another, he lifted me to his lips.

"I defy the laws of men. My will is omnipotent. Tonight I shall take you away with me," he said . . . and I fell in love with Gregory.

We hastened through the wet dark. Suddenly Gregory halted.

"We will have to go back," he said. "I have forgotten my rubbers" . . . and I fell out of love with Gregory.

II

Bill

THE lounge type wearied me. Among them was not one "man's man." I considered the injustice of things. Though environment removed him from my sphere, was it not possible that a real man, a man who could arouse primitive passion in me, roved the slums? I determined to seek him out. I found Bill. Bill's hair was shaggy, his fists were knotted, and over one eye was a black patch.

"I want you to go straight . . . for my sake," I whispered.

"I know there's a Heaven, Lady, because you're an Angel," he said . . . and I fell in love with Bill.

When I reached home, I found that my diamond brooch, my opal necklace and my pocketbook were gone . . . and I fell out of love with Bill.

III

Allan

ALLAN was very young, fresh from his father's farm. A moustache in embryo crested his upper lip and he was as awkward as a duckling. Throughout the evening the sight of me was the end of his guileless gazings. I encouraged him with my eyes of starless night. As he approached the thumping of his heart seemed as audible as the clinking of narrow-pronged forks against oyster shells . . . and I fell in love with Allan.

"Why did you seek me?" I murmured, slant-eyed.

"Because you remind me of my Mother," he replied simply . . . and I fell out of love with Allan.

IV

Claudius

CONVENTION and Mrs. Grundy disgruntled me. I felt that mundane things were shrivelling my Soul. I longed for the expansion of my Soul, its amelioration. I came upon Claudius, outstretched upon a haystack.

"This hayrick expresses my Soul," he said. "Teeming with sunshine, field-fragrant, the rendezvous of butterflies. The sky is an expression of your Soul—now turquoise and tranquil, now mystic with pendant clouds" . . . and I fell in love with Claudius.

As I scaled the haycock to join Claudius in further discussion of our Souls, a keeper in the uniform of a local lunatic asylum approached. As he led Claudius away he tapped his head and indicated his charge with a knowing smile . . . and I fell out of love with Claudius.

V

Jacques

I CONSIDERED Jacques my mate, destined to become mine since Eternity.

Huddled together in the gloom, we drank warm wine from the same bowl and discussed affinities. Jacques stroked my throat with his fingers and said:

"You are a part of me. Since I found you I have become complete" . . . and I fell in love with Jacques.

The intensity of my love for Jacques made me ill, and it was a month before I saw him again.

"Have I met you before?" he asked. "You look a bit familiar" . . . and I fell out of love with Jacques.



BACK TO EDEN

By Dennison Varr

THEY found him wandering around in a dazed condition, bearing the earmarks of a vigorous quarrel, a blackened eye, bleeding nose and a gap in his front teeth.

Filled with pity they seized him by the arms.

"Come, old chap," they said. "Let us take you home to your wife."

He groaned piteously.

"Don't you understand?" he murmured feebly.



WHEN a man hears his wife praised by another man he feels elated. When a woman hears her husband praised by another woman she gets suspicious.



INEXPLICABLE

By N. G. Caylor

ALL evening her eyes had laughed into his with senseless laughter. Now, as she attempted to back out of the door of the little candy shop, and found it locked, she stopped, facing him, and flung back her head in an abandon of silent merriment.

Her lips were a joyous red arch; above her uptilted nose her eyes shone upward in fixed rapture; her dark, curved eyebrows pointed delicately down into the outlines that separated the glowing light of her face from the surrounding darkness.

Stanley Reed's eyes held the picture for a moment.

"Pretty—but meaningless as a poster," he told himself cynically.

They re-entered the candy shop that had become deserted while they had lingered at the table, and walked the tiled floor to another entrance. Reed found himself a bit ashamed of his presence in the prim black-and-white place, with its bows and bonbon boxes in elaborate display cases—"a fit place for the amours of High School gadabouts."

Once outside, as they broke into a quick stride, she still looked at him with almost questioning gayety.

"Good Lord, she must know she has some expression on her face! People don't look like that without some intention," he thought.

"Put on your hat," he commanded gruffly.

Her coquetting eyes went to his as to a mirror as she crammed the hat over her hair, with its Roman gold sheen, its ridiculous suggestion of seeming bobbed, and the still more ridiculous bangs—"artfully artless."

"Just like a blamed movie actress," he characterized her gesture.

She thrust her hands into the pockets of her slim blue coat, and walked thoughtfully beside him.

"Gathering a new mood," he thought. "When she turns to me again she'll be sad—or something."

He was thankful that for the time she kept her eyes from him. His irritability began to slip from him as they walked two silent blocks, soft, dark, with ringing white sidewalks.

After all, why did he seek her out if he did not enjoy being with her? He wondered what his feeling toward her was. Just now he thought he would like to clutch the sleeves of the boyish coat and shake the girl thoroughly, tweaking her about. She was just the right size for that—"cute" many would call her. But in this and the appropriateness to a shaking, there were many who could outshine her.

Numerous candy-counter girls, ingénues also in their way, occurred to him, bits of blonde, high-heeled slimness. Thank goodness, at least she wasn't high-heeled. She was boyish.

Yet there had been that girl in the Morals Court the week before, boyish to a detail rocking back and forth on slim, defiant legs, feet planted apart, flat-heeled. Her little chin had been thrust forward shrewdly and belligerently as she listened, her thin lips moved in a mocking undulation, cool as her eyes, when the judge said:

"Six months in the House of Correction!"

As a study in boyishness, she far surpassed Bernardine, whose rounded features made her resemble many types, never distinct enough to suggest one image, finely chiselled, he thought.

"May I come in?" her sweet, somewhat flat, voice sounded.

She pushed a little ungloved hand, cold he knew, and somewhat hard, into the crook of his arm.

"Now she's wistful," he grimaced, thinking of her slightly nasal tone.

He reverted to his previous thoughts. "No, there is nothing unique about her—"

He looked at her and was surprised to find no trace of the wistfulness his cynicism suggested. There was only pleasure in the perfect little face, artless gladness.

Quickly her eyes responded to his. She opened her lips in a sounded exhalation, half gasp and half unvibrating laughter—an unsophisticated sound.

Despite the fact that her hand was heavy on his arm, she seemed to be walking alone, to be laughing alone. "For all her intelligence, she's not as companionable as a ticket-seller in a movie theater—"

He listened to her joyous little gasp and saw her suddenly shut her lids on the little dancing beams of light that laughed out of her eyes.

"You'd expect her to gurgle next, like a child in a tub."

Was it by such tricks that she expected to interest him? Did she want to interest him? Or was she *really* happy?

Looking into her eyes, open now again, with their still response, he smiled. There was charm in their unresisting glow. . . .

But he knew that another moment of that constant joy in her face would annoy him. Again he would question the meaningless eagerness of the eyes, full of golden lights.

Even this business of putting her arm in his! Her soft voice, pleading. Not legitimate weapons for a niggard. Still, her advances were somehow impersonal. Her laugh, for instance. The joy, radiating toward him, did not touch. Her eyes seemed to laugh into the atmosphere about him. Even the most intimate of glances was spent before it reached him.

She was a child. "Hell—fine amusement, dancing kids around to ice-cream parlors—"

But she was a sophisticated infant—brimming with phrases aptly acquired, an ingenuousness too persistent and too intricate to be unconscious. Sometimes she came out with some pert finality, succinct, well-phrased, discerning. He was sorry that on such occasions he knew the expression to be filched. He cast about in his mind for its author among her circle of acquaintances.

Her ingenuous manner was her guard against further questioning. She seemed to say, proudly, "That was pretty good, wasn't it? Please—I am not capable of more just now."

At times there was even a defensive frankness in her joy at her aptness, which said, "Of course, we both know I didn't think of that remark, but don't stop my fun."

With a tenderness he felt to be foolish, he even refrained from the easy revenge of questioning her about the authors of whom she spoke—he might hurt her.

Yet her blatant assertiveness often hurt him.

He was hurt when by some serious remark he tacitly admitted her to his plane, only to be startled by her flippant arraignment of his idols. One couldn't argue with her, but the feeling of shame was there. To have exhibited one's idols before this arrogant idiot.

"Verlaine—"

"He's decadent—"

"But that's no fault—if to be sensitive—"

"Morbid!"

"Prokofieff's music—"

"Brass-band stuff!"

"Lime-house Nights"—

"Cheap, sensational!"

"Whitman—"

"Give me Billy Sunday!"

These remarks, scattered lightly, ir-religiously, accompanied by gestures that not only dismissed the subject but removed her from the conversation, he remembered. Now that they recurred to him, he was disgusted with himself.

Plainly, there was no basis for an infatuation with her—if infatuation there was. A cheap little liar—she couldn't impress him with her fake accomplishments. If knowledge implied understanding, she was a numskull.

With a thorough and characteristic lack of perception, she had even managed, in hit or miss style, to offend his æstheticism by vapid remarks about the uselessness of art.

"The only thing necessary today is economic readjustment," she once said with a glittering air of discovery—"a Little Jack Horner expression," Reed called it.

"Idiot! At least she is consistent. There's nothing in *her* worthy of assailement. A living ellipsis—reminder of omissions."

Had he ever really heard her say anything necessary, convincing?

She was comical, insincere, at best a chameleon flaunting vicarious colors playfully.

"Please speak to me—" her voice came plaintively.

Intrigue. He would teach her. "Parasite!"

"I have had a terribly silly mood coming on," she said with her soft laugh, for which her lips uplifted whimsically.

"You're walking pigeon-toed," he commented dryly.

Her footsteps lagged, and her hand dragged on his arm.

"It's because you're pushing me off the sidewalk," she complained.

He moved away.

"I'm not going to hold on to you forever." Her voice trickled into the little hoarse gasp.

With her arms tight against her, hands in pockets, she danced forward on her light feet, drifting zigzaggedly forward.

Then she turned.

"Hold on to me," she shrilled merrily, "or I'll clown!"

"Damn unintelligent!" He was surprised to hear that he had really voiced the words.

For a moment she was still.

Then her eyes mocked at him again. "Me? and intelligence?" Her voice was a shrill whisper.

Suddenly he slipped an arm about her bouncing shoulder. That was the way to subdue her.

"But good Lord, why should I?" he questioned himself. "She probably wants me to."

She stayed within his arm. As they walked the silent streets his gesture became a conscious embrace. His heart pounded high in his throat; he felt afraid to breathe.

Her free arm tore the hat from her soft hair, luminous even in the night. His arm about her tightened. And now, as they moved rhythmically along the dark street, her golden head was almost on his shoulder, her face, with its rapt joy, turned up to the sky.

"There is spray in the air—feel!" she said.

They had neared the lake. The air was misted, poignant with a sharp spray. He had not been conscious of it until she had spoken.

He was filled with bitterness at himself. In its revelation, he and the girl were trifling—rather, he had come to her trifling level. That he, an artist, should walk on this powerful night with this little fool, and that she should drown out the night—

"The laughing simp—"

But he could not drop the arm encircling her. It was pleasant—walking slowly into the sharp lake wind.

He did not want to look at her, fearing greater disillusionment than that upon which his strange mood hovered. He was nervously aware of her clamoring joyousness, of her deadly calculated abandon. Her joy, he felt, was cold, translated into sound, it would blow like a tuba, even and loud, without a scintillation in it.

Years before, when he had differentiated men and women by assuming that the charm of women was the indication of numberless subtleties unknown to man, he had dreamed of a woman with moods as tremulous as the sounds of a violin. Well, there were none. He

knew much of many lacks, the shrill shriek of the flute, the thin vibration of the piccolo, and the hollow beat of drums whose boom had promised depth.

She moved beneath his clutching arm. Suddenly uncomfortable in his embrace, she reminded him of her dominance.

"Silly—" her laughing lips framed.

And *she* was blotting out the night.

Their steps reached the shore. He released her so suddenly, that he felt her stumble to regain her balance. He turned away and clenched his hands as he stared into the night.

Like a suppliant, he yearned for it to move him. He ached for its cleansing magic, the sharp invigoration that had touched him many times before. And yet he was conscious that he read, rather than sensed, its appeal; like a connoisseur he judged the night to be superlatively beautiful.

The spray, beating in tiny particles, began to torture his face. He was conscious of waiting for something, of being in the night passingly, a stranger.

His trained eyes sought the glimmering red light in the distance whose wavering pulse should have been a mystic key to the night whose glamour he could not absorb. Words came—

"Electric blue—both sky and lake—drifting toward the land in thin white rifts—"

He could have laughed at his impotence.

"Like a blamed litterateur—"

And now, just as there were moments in which he was aware of his greatness, when the noise of the world outside his window was a purposeless buzzing before the pulse of his genius, so in this moment he felt petty, akin to all he despised, the trifling, the shallow, the insincere.

He even felt immature, dipping in the effervescent stimulation of the night in callow manner, needful of another with whom to share his piffing mood. And the other—a silly flapper, probably eager for the sentimental pot-pourri of caresses, puppy-love verbiage, all the idiotic mess of summer-night romancing.

He was suddenly devoid of mood, like a man staring indeterminately into the morning upon emerging from his house.

He felt a choking sensation. But it was not night and sky and sea coming toward him. He wanted to look at the girl.

"Giggle as she does into the face of the night, that's what I ought to do. . . . Destructive little counterfeit—coquette—with false gladness—"

The night, coming toward him, taunted with defiant elusiveness. Over there just beyond his glance, stood the girl.

"Trickster—!"

In the candy shop, she had lifted a sugar-powdered strawberry from its pedestal of ice-cream and had flopped it into her childish mouth with a silly look of wonder and exploration. Her childish mouth—yet charming. . . . The whimsicality of her eyes. . . . "Correct" she had called him, looking at him—so—

The power of her vague, sudden expressions! Dark eyes, mischievous beneath uplifted eyebrows, drifting through vagueness into another mood, effervescent, unfathomable—

The image faded before the drifting, argent night. . . .

And now, he was looking with jaded eyes into it. He felt sorry for himself that he could not rise to its emotion. Perhaps he would never rise to such nights again. Perhaps his was the paltry sphere, his glimpses into the heights lucky, his dreams mirages of self-intoxication.

So he dropped into the commonplace. He saw, as his, the sleepy over-laden jog along a dusty road, instead of the fire-breathing dash he had dreamed. Perhaps he would marry one as incapable of dreams as he. At the moment such a marriage seemed possible.

He was moved to trifle with the paltry occasion, to taste its slender range of pleasure.

The resolution seemed a familiar one, one of many, many disappointments he was suddenly aware of—vague, old—old—

This girl, too, who had caught his passing interest, only to fail—

When he turned, he stood, for a moment, silent before the picture.

Her slim figure silhouetted against the luminous night, she was a study in blues, with something of the electric brilliance of the night and its soft smudges of shadow, her hair a pale, quivering aura.

As he touched her, she was like chiselled stone, the life in her imperceptible except that she seemed to breathe together with the night—

He had a glimpse of her pale blue face, glistening eyes, her mouth a little crooked circle of wonder and terror as she stared before her. . . .

He wanted to stop. But in a lightning moment he caught her to him. He became aware that she was whimpering as she averted her face from his kisses, trivial, searching.

With a sob, she wrenched away from him.

"Used me like a prop—in this wonderful night," her voice, suddenly robbed of its nuances, snapped.

He followed her stumbling steps up the beach.

Good Lord—how mistaken he had been! The woman, capable of feeling great moments, of whom he had despaired—

So she had felt the night. Again he saw the little crooked mouth, tense with awe, and glistening pools of her eyes. . . .

She had been great as the night—universe breathing to universe—

As they walked, he fancied he heard a sob in her throat, low, persistent. At the door of her house, she turned simply and walked in. Her manner, with its simple unconsciousness of his presence, was final. He would never know. The idiocies of the evening—her final simplicity—? Her expression, "like a prop in this night," came to him.

"Bosh, she heard someone pull that—sometime. Just a phrase—"

But he was unconvinced.

As he walked on, the night was filled with little whistling sounds, like a low whimper, or breath caught sharply between the teeth . . .



COLOUR AND CALORIES

By J. C. Drake

LOIS is a brunette and cold. She chills any ardour with steely glances and discourages all pleas for a kiss. I shall part with her. There are other girls. There is Hilda. Hilda is not a brunette and cold. She is fair and warmer.



A WOMAN always kisses her husband good-bye with some show of interest. There is always the chance that he may never return.



PASTEL

By Jean Allen

THE sky and sea,
An indivisible sheet of grey blue,
Shut down
On the distant line of saffron beach.
The tide creeps slowly over the inlet,
Widening the curving stream
That intersects the inland meadow.
Nearby,
The foghorn warns unceasingly.

Here am I still,
Where you left me in the misty lilac dawn.
The locust leaves flutter above me
In the tremulous wind
And drift listlessly down
About my hammock.
I close my eyes
And see your eyes,
Wistful, searching,
Looking long into my own,
As your hands
Draw my face towards your lips
With never a spoken word.
I remember the look
Of the marsh at flood tide,
An opaque silver lake
At the foot of the hill;
And the far faint lights
Of a steamer passing, ghostlike,
In the early morning stillness.

Now,
In this pallid sunlight,
I remember the tenderness of your eyes:
Yet,
Do I question the translation
Of your eloquent silence.



MELODRAMA

A ONE-ACT SKETCH

By J. R. Milne

PARTICIPANTS:

HERO

HEROINE

VILLAIN

MAID

TIME AND PLACE BOTH UNKNOWN

STRANGE as it may be seem, there are no beds in the room; there are no French windows; and there are no curtains behind which a stealthy visitor might hide. It is not a bed-room. There is a table near the center littered with books and magazines. It also supports a box of cigarettes. About the room, promiscuously, are a number of comfortable-looking chairs. There are a few that do not seem inviting. A bit to the left of the table is a lazy divan. On the divan, reclining with her knee jutting upwards, is the Heroine. I must call her the Heroine because I don't know her name. She is smoking a Murad and is contemplating the ceiling, perhaps thoughtfully, perhaps vacantly. It is very hard to tell. There is an ash-tray beside her, but she ignores it when she flicks her cigarette.

I cannot retard the action, for there is nothing else to say. A door opens—there are two doors to the room—and she turns and rests on her elbow. It must be the Hero.

He advances to the table, takes a cigarette from the box, fingers it, and then throws it back. He appears dejected.

HEROINE

(Yawning listlessly.) Hello . . .
(He seats himself with a grunt in an armchair by her side.)

HERO

It's a devil of a life, isn't it?
(Her views seem to coincide with his. She nods, and looks at him quizzically.)

HEROINE

It sure is; but what are you going to do about it?

HERO

Do you know . . . I'm getting sick and tired of the whole business. (He shakes his head gloomily; and at a word from the Heroine, reaches over and rings for the maid. The Heroine once more nods sympathetically. It eggs him on.) A year ago I had figured that I had draped myself over the back of a gilt chair three thousand times. Now I've lost track of the count, but I know it's humiliating. And there are other things.

HEROINE

(*She is getting interested. She leans toward him mournfully.*) And think of me. I've left enough meringues and ices untasted to start a new Sherry's. They never let me eat them. And I like them.

(*The Hero's determined manner shows that he is not to be outdone. He started the complaint and has a right to talk.*)

HERO

They never let me shoot my cuffs. (*He shoots them defiantly.*) And I'm always fastidious in dress. Lord, how I hate a fastidious man!

HEROINE

I don't mind being considered beautiful. (*She admits it quite casually, and contemplates the debris on the floor. Then she makes use of the ash-tray. It is not wise to bait the maid too severely.*) But when they speak of my complexion as one that scorns powder—it's an insult. Any woman has a perfect right to improve herself . . . a little. (*She looks as if she expected him to contradict her, which a Hero never does.*)

(*The maid wheels in with the tea wagon. And, as the Heroine grasps the teapot, he scowls.*)

HERO

There's another thing. They make me take lemon in my tea . . . and I like it with four lumps . . . no cream. (*The Heroine obeys.*)

HEROINE

Have you any idea how many cups I have to drink in one working day? (*There is no answer forthcoming.*) I'm getting to be a tea reservoir.

HERO

And every time you drink a cup of tea I have to smoke a cigarette. I get it both ways. I'm ruining my health. (*He studies her, and then plunges.*) I read a story a short while ago about a Frenchman who had a hundred-odd children. He was a bush-leaguer!

HEROINE

(*Not comprehending.*) A bush-leaguer?

HERO

(*Smiling doubtfully.*) Have you any idea how many *we*—we have?

HEROINE

(*Blushing—being a heroine it is one of her assets.*) No-o . . . but . . .

HERO

Well, it might be worse. . . . The playwrights usually have sense enough to end at the marriage. But sometimes they go too far. At any rate, we've got far too many.

HEROINE

(*Turning so that she cannot see his face.*) You don't seem to like to have children. . . .

(*The Hero is confused. The situation is delicate.*)

HERO

Well . . . it isn't that. Of course . . . well, I don't know just what to say. But if I were a bookkeeper drawing thirty per, I'd have a devil of a time.

HEROINE

(*Mournfully.*) You don't love me any more. . . . (*He moves to her in consternation, and, bending, kisses her lips lightly.*) No . . . You don't love me any more. I think it's the Vampire. (*She doesn't notice the startled look in his eyes.*)

HERO

(*Insincerely.*) Of course I love you. But you must admit that this life would bore anyone. . . .

HEROINE

But you don't have to be mauled by the Villain. You don't have to be forced down onto a divan by brutal strength. You don't have to have your hair undone in fierce struggle. You don't have to have your clothes ripped by him. And you don't have to have

him kiss your unwilling mouth passionately . . . though he does kiss rather nicely.

HERO

(*Smiling craftily.*) Are you sure you don't like all that?

HEROINE

(*Flushing.*) I won't deny that it's almost pleasant at times . . . almost. Still, it's rather provoking to have to go through all that strong-arm stuff just for the sake of a kiss at the end.

(*The Hero, warming to the discussion, has forgotten his cigarette. Quixotically, considering his protests, he lights another.*)

HERO

Speaking of struggles, do you realize that whenever you're wrestling with the Villain I'm trying to break down the door with a chair, or to climb through the window? It's no joke, from my standpoint; and I don't have the satisfaction of getting stolen kisses. And I have to fight the Villain. Of course, I always win out in the end, but he gets in some good licks. Do you know that the cellar's almost full of my liniment bottles?

(*Her eyes radiate pity.*)

HEROINE

Poor boy; you have a hard time. But don't forget that I had an awful time with the Vampire last week. It was when I caught her making love to you in her apartment. I had to pull her hair and scratch. But she can pull harder than I can and her nails are longer. One of our recent babies saved the situation. (*This was malicious.*)

HERO

The Vampire is a splendid woman.

HEROINE

(*Thoughtfully.*) As you accused me of caring for the Villain, why shouldn't I think things about the Vampire? You never call me a splendid woman. . . . I think you're in love with her!

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(*He bites his cigarette in his agitation. He splutters into his handkerchief in an effort to rid his mouth of the bitter grains. For a moment he cannot speak.*)

HERO

Don't you think such things! You're my wife . . . we've been married enough to make it a reasonably sure thing. And if I ever catch him! . . .

HEROINE

(*Forlornly and meekly.*) Yes . . . but Rudie . . .

HERO

(*Interrupting.*) . . . So you call him Rudie! (*He makes for the door.*)

HEROINE

Where are you going? . . .

HERO

(*Very explicitly.*) Out!

(*The door closes. For a moment or two the room is very quiet. The Heroine lights another Murad and burns her finger in the act. She squeals. The other door opens—we put two in the scene—and a stranger enters. He must be the Villain, for there are only two men in the cast.*)

HEROINE

(*Beaming over a stray tear.*) Oh Rudie!

VILLAIN

(*Kissing the burnt finger, and seating himself on the divan.*) Love!

HEROINE

But you mustn't waste your kisses that way, Rudie. (*He takes the hint, and they cling together until air is absolutely necessary. She gasps. Her cheeks are rosy.*) Delicious!

VILLAIN

(*Fondling her hand.*) What about him? . . . (*He points to the door through which the hero has made his exit.*)

HEROINE

I think it will be all right. (*She smiles reminiscently.*) I know him rather well.

VILLAIN

(*Drawing her to him.*) And he will grant a divorce? . . .

HEROINE

I am almost sure of it. Oh, Rudie! . . . (*Her voice is muffled.*) I'm not sure that I like you quite so rough.

VILLAIN

(*Severely.*) You must take me as I am. . . . (*She submits.*)

HEROINE

(*Her eyes frown. She is troubled.*) He was speaking about the children this morning. What will happen to them after the divorce? . . .

VILLAIN

(*With a confidence he does not feel.*) Why, he'll want them himself, of course.

HEROINE

N-no. (*She shakes her head despondently.*) He doesn't seem to have lost much love to them. Besides, as he said, there are too many for any one man to look after.

(*The Villain is annoyed. Here is a contingency he had not foreseen. Then he laughs.*)

VILLAIN

Why not leave things as they are . . . as far as the children are concerned, I mean. Neither of you pay much attention to them, and I'll swear you don't even remember all their names. Forget 'em!

HEROINE

Oh, cruel! . . .

VILLAIN

(*Doggedly.*) Well, what are you going to do?

HEROINE

(*Tearfully.*) I don't know. . . . (*He manages to kiss the tears away—*

they are not very abundant, perhaps copious is a better word.)

VILLAIN

(*Soothingly.*) . . . Then it's all settled. (*They kiss, and neglect to unlock themselves. Time passes, not much, but some. The door opens . . . either one . . . and the Hero enters. He scowls at the amorous couple. The Villain tries to disengage himself furiously, though he knows it is useless.*)

HERO

Pretty, pretty! (*The Heroine notices him for the first time. Her lips twist. She is uncertain whether it is best to laugh or to cry. She does neither.*)

HEROINE

Rudie and I are going to be married. (*The Villain nods.*)

HERO

Yes?

HEROINE

(*Emphatically.*) Yes. Just as soon as you and I can get divorced. . . .

HERO

And when will that be? (*The Villain decides that he must assert himself.*)

VILLAIN

Why right away, of course!

HERO

(*Paying no attention to the Villain.*) You can't get married. (*The Heroine stares at him; the Villain is uncomfortable.*)

VILLAIN

But why? . . . (*He gets to his feet uneasily, and attempts an attitude of indifference while lighting a cigarette. Cigarettes are handy things.*)

HERO

(*Musingly.*) It's impossible.

HEROINE

But you haven't told us why. . . . (*The Hero smiles.*)

HERO

Because your children would be a menace to the world. . . . The offspring of a Villain and a Heroine. It's all off. There's no chance.

HEROINE

(*Suspiciously.*) How do you know? (*Then she thinks she understands.*) You've been to see the Vampire! You were going to marry her. . . . And when you found that it couldn't be done, you come back and pretend innocence. You fraud! . . .

HERO

(*Losing his composure.*) Well . . . (*He tries to find an excuse, but he feels that he's caught.*) At any rate, you can't be married. It's a fact . . .

VILLAIN

(*Once more finding his voice.*) Who told you?

HERO

The parson.

HEROINE

(*Her eyes are contracted in deep thought. She is near to her desire, and does not intend to let a mere parson interfere.*) But we don't have to have children, do we, in these enlightened times?

HERO

(*Drawing a deep breath.*) How does the parson know that you won't have children? You can't convince him! He wouldn't listen to the idea. Told me it was all wrong. . . .

HEROINE

Will you let me have a divorce if I find a way to get married?

HERO

Of course.

HEROINE

(*Happily.*) Come, Rudie. It's all settled. (*She turns back to the Hero.*) I know a perfectly dear old Justice of the Peace who isn't anxious for the safety of the world. And you don't

care for children, anyway. (*The Hero shows no signs of elation.*)

HERO

It's no use. I tried him, too.

HEROINE

(*Dismayed.*) And he refused? Why? . . .

HERO

He's in love with the Vampire himself.

HEROINE

(*Laughing.*) Well, that lets you out, but it doesn't affect Rudie and me. (*The Hero shrugs.*)

HERO

He won't marry you, either. (*They regard him in astonishment.*)

VILLAIN

Of course he will!

HERO

(*Wearily.*) Oh, go ahead and try . . . but he won't do it. He would lose his only excuse for not helping me out. (*The Heroine casts herself upon the divan in tears. The Hero moves to the door.*) I'm going back to the Vampire. She's used to free love, and won't miss a little thing like marriage. (*The door closes behind him.*)

HEROINE

(*Sitting up.*) Let's elope, Rudie. . . .

VILLAIN

(*Taking out his watch.*) Can't be done. . . . We go back to work for Klaw and Erlanger in less than an hour. Besides, there's no sense to it. You heard what he said. Let's forget the marriage hokum and try out this Palais Royal free love stuff. It sounds pretty good.

(*Her voice muffled.*) Yes . . .

CURTAIN

HOME

By Joseph Upper

IT was evening when he made up his mind.

The resolution came to him with the calm certainty of the evening breeze. He would go back. Six hours short of the next twenty-four would find him there.

He had only to take a train, then another train, and watch the pictures along the way change with the leaping miles until they fitted once more into the old, familiar frames. The low, rolling land with blotches of small timber and occasional ribbons of peaceful water would gradually give place to the rugged hills and fruitful valleys which he knew so well, to the mysteriously towering woods and the roar of narrow, tumultuous rivers.

A string of familiar villages came last, and then—home.

That was it. His sisters were right about it after all. It was home. Even though they hadn't got on with him any too well, it didn't matter now. He could afford to forget all that. He had been too impatient anyway.

It was a mistake to expect them to understand. He hadn't clearly understood, himself. No wonder they were skeptical and unsympathetic. What did they know about art? They knew nothing save their sewing tables and their book-keeping, and it was foolish of him to expect that they would see why he wanted to come to the city and write when he might have stayed at home and perhaps have come to be floorwalker in Stanley's Department Store.

Now he could afford to forget it all, and he *would* forget it all and would go home. Everything would be different now. They would be so glad to

see him that they would forget their earlier disappointment, and he would forget all their old cruelty and persecution. It was home that he wanted. He wanted to be with his own people, and these sisters were all the people he had. Yes, it was all settled. He would go home tomorrow.

II

THE sunlit fields and sparkling rivers became indistinct as the day drifted into evening. Now and then the smoking chimneys of busy manufacturing towns loomed up out of the vanishing stretches of farmland, and the train stopped to let more people get on. Soon it would be time to change stations. Then the other train, and a long ride through the night. He hoped he could get a sleeper. Maybe not. It didn't matter anyway. He could sit up. He could sleep when he got there.

There was no room in the sleeper. He had feared as much. Ought to have made reservations. But it didn't matter. He was going home.

Darkness settled over the countryside. The train raced on through oblivious villages. Now and again, shading his eyes with his hands, he could see enough from the window to make out where they were. They had passed the mountains that skirted the farther side of the wide river. A long valley of fertile wheat fields came next, then the capital of the State. There was where the hills began. Then a chain of manufacturing centers. He would have to change cars again. It was a tiresome trip. But after all it was worth while. He would be at home in the morning.

Light came creeping over the hills like a wildcat. It must be morning, then. He guessed he had been asleep. Anyway he had changed cars all right. This was the last lap of the journey. The woods were a melancholy gray in the first shafts of dawn.

Soon he would see the old, familiar country. The sun would come out and strike the scattered rocks on the hill-sides. The train raced on through the strangely colored haze that belonged neither to night nor to morning.

An hour now, an hour at the most, and he would be at home once more.

III

"WHEN you have to work—"

His oldest sister was speaking.

He knew what she was going to say. She had already said it more than fifty times, and he had not yet been home two days.

"When you have to work—"

Good Lord! Didn't *he* have to work? Did she think he was going to turn the next corner, pick a fortune off a drug store window, and return with the means of pensioning her for life?

"When you have to work," she whined, "you simply can't do—"

He didn't know what it was she said you couldn't do, and he didn't care. He reached for a book and opened it. He recognized it as one he had sent her.

"Have you read any of this?" he asked.

"Yes. Quite a good deal of it. It's good."

Inane commentary. He turned the pages. Practically all of them were uncut. "Liar!" he ejaculated under his breath.

Elaborate plans were being made for his entertainment.

"Now if we go for an auto ride in the morning, we'll have to 'phone Mr. West about his car. The State roads are the only ones that are good to ride on. Where shall we go? Is there anything you'd like especially to see? The Government has been building some new houses over the river for the munitions

workers. Would you like to see those? Of course, we'll go to the cemetery. I don't think you've been there since—"

"Ye Gods! Can these women think of nothing except workmen's cottages and the cemetery!"

Finally they went to bed. He was alone in his old room. How little it was. He wondered vaguely how he had ever endured it here two whole years. In the hall the two women were still discussing the proposed auto ride.

"If only Mr. West wouldn't talk so much while he is driving. Of course, there's that other man, but we don't know his name. I don't see why you didn't remember it. You might have thought that we would want to hire him sometime."

Why, if it caused all this discussion, couldn't they abandon the scheme? What was the use of taking all the joy out of it this way?

"The other man was a more careful driver. Of course, it may be too cold. We can't tell until morning. How much did Mr. West charge last time? I think it is outrageous. Just to the cemetery and around by the Turnpike? Yes, and over the river. But *that* isn't far."

Their doors closed, and he went to bed wondering if they had as much trouble as this over the details of every excursion they took. He had heard so much about this prospective auto ride that he was dreading it already.

Somehow or other there was nothing in all this that suggested home. It was more as though his sisters were trying to entertain a rich relative. But he wasn't rich. Did they think he ever would be? Was it possible that they had more faith in his work, now that it had brought him some success, than they professed? Were they building on the future? . . .

He fell asleep wondering why he wasn't enjoying his vacation.

IV

THE days dragged on. The auto ride flitted before his vision like the memory of some dull nightmare. It had been

cold and windy and damp. The woman's conversation had been cold and windy and damp. It had been cold and windy and damp in the cemetery, where they had gone last as though they were saving it, like a sort of Puritan penance, to take away the little pleasure they had gotten out of the forepart of the trip.

He had walked about the town. There was almost no one there whom he knew, and no one whom he knew that he really cared to see. His sisters were constantly suggesting the names of people he ought to call on—failing old women, long-forgotten acquaintances of his boyhood, distant relatives whose small talk he despised and whose inquisitive questions irritated him past endurance.

His sisters were little better. They talked shop and office, or read the daily paper aloud, or commented on the movements of their neighbors. Sometimes they regaled him with accounts of the refreshments they served when the minister came to see them, or when some of their half dozen friends dropped in for the evening.

He had walked in the park. He had followed the bend of the river beyond the limits of the town and filled his lungs with the damp smell of water-soaked reeds. It was as though the whole place were a cemetery. A thick fog of melancholy recollections hung about his walks and no ray of present interest could penetrate it. The streets of the town were like those he had read about somewhere, in some quaint volume, and the people who passed back and forth to and from work seemed to be actors in a motion picture. It was all so remote that it seemed foreign. He was a stranger in a strange land where memories were the only friendly things in evidence; and *they* were sad.

Yet this was the place from which he had gone forth, from which he had been almost driven forth, to shift for him-

self and make a living if he could. This was the place to which he had hurried with the eagerness of the racing trains, through all the intervening valleys and past the darkly wooded hills. This was the place his sisters were forever writing to him about, the place they called home. He had left his work to come back here.

Suddenly his mind traveled back again across the swiftly traversed landscapes to the city he had left, to the place where his work lay neglected. The walls of his room stared at him from across that distance, and the papers on his writing table beckoned to him. A strange wave of longing swept over him. And he knew that he was homesick.

V

THE sun was setting behind the vanishing hills, and the evening wind stirred the tops of the wheat into ripples like those that trouble a golden sea. The train raced on through the country quiet. He lay down the book he had been reading and looked out of the window. The last chain of hills. Soon the first of the manufacturing towns would loom up across the valley. An hour or two and he would turn in. This time he had a sleeper.

Two hours later he stood on the car steps and watched the pavements of a sleeping city where the mood made irregular puddles of light in a dark side street. The train had stopped at the largest of the manufacturing towns. In the stillness he turned back and went down the aisle of the sleeper towards his berth. Nearby the porter was regretfully informing a fellow passenger that the train would be late. He went to sleep with the thought that it didn't make an difference how late the train was so long as it finally got there.

For he was going home.



MUSIC IN THE DESERT

By Milnes Levick

I

THE girl stood at the end of the shack's narrow porch. Her slim figure was limned with peculiar charm against the softening hues of the earth, the mountains, the sky. She gazed over the scant brush sloping down to the valley, over the desert below and the hills massed distantly, seeking upon the other side of the sink for a little patch of dark green—junipers, stunted junipers of the parsimonious hills: she had been told of them by a prospector who had seen them near at hand. Often she pictured them, held by a strange appeal, as she looked across the low lands forming a great draw through which the winds of the desert swept mightily.

There was an enticement in the opalescent hills that carried her gaze far away: ranges rising, ever rising, one behind another, carrying the eye on and on. The Slate range, the Coso, the Argus; beyond, the Panamints: lower bastions of the Sierras, far flung upon the wastes, indifferent, ever changing, yet with that power which draws men to them beyond recall. The desert had already touched her for its own.

Her upraised hand, resting against the wall of the little restaurant, touched a card announcing the coming of an itinerant dentist. With the arm still poised high, she turned her head—a movement which suggested rather than showed the grace of a body between childhood and girlhood. From the other end of the town, a quarter of a mile away, there came music of brass. It rose, clear but modulated by the distance, above the deep hum of the great mine's hundred-stamp mill beyond.

It was the first time a brass band had come to Santa Juana. The girl was delighted. Though she had heard her mother's boarders speak of the band, now she had almost consciously tried to nurse her interest into surprise, for events were few.

A German band, the men had said, of four pieces: a band of the type once common in even the great American cities, but now driven to such resources as this mining camp. The musicians, fat and yellow mustached, had come down over the Tehachapi from the oil fields of the San Joaquin, the farming towns above, the little cities still strung meagerly through California's immense central valley.

They were playing "The Beautiful Blue Danube." The girl recognized it: it was one of the few tunes of the phonograph in the union hall, where, infrequently, she had gone to dances. Her mother would not often let her go: the town's grand balls, advertised through the country in grandiloquent placards, drew from Mojave, sometimes even from Bakersfield, women of whom her mother disapproved.

Save for those dances, music had been for the girl only an occasional Sunday reverberation from the square little church at the end of the street.

The thought of restrictions on such amusements recurred now in the form of an impression of the total result of many instances: they gave an incongruous effect of narrowness to the material vastness before her.

This desert set between the ranges was immensity to which she had come to respond, adjusting herself to its caprices, finding in it fellowship, intimacy,

even a material spirit almost greater than the warmly physical solicitude of her mother in flesh.

For five years now they had lived here, the woman busied with her little restaurant, the girl free with much leisure without companionship. There were few of her age in the camp and between them there acted and reacted with strange force barriers of caste, above and below, and the economic pressure of the camp's division, union faction against non-union, each with its stores, its clubs and halls, its trend toward hostile entity.

So it was when they first came in and so it was now. Yet she had come a child of the cities and in those five years the hills, the skies of marvelous stars, the waste, its creatures and its almost pathetic striving for a luxuriance like that of the favored places—all this had become a part of the girl's life and emotions, giving surcease and response.

She had been frightened in the beginning: not overwhelmed, for her child's soul had been too immature to grasp to the full the solitudes, but with all the city child's diffidence in the face of an unaccustomed nature. Then as the desert life unfolded itself bit by bit she had become fearful of the silence of each isolated aspect in turn. Her salvation had been a dim comprehension, more certitude than guess of the fellowship of all nature, a feeling of a scheme of things that could evolve and embrace the centipede no less than man.

Man and the beings of the baking earth, they followed their existence side by side, and the girl, seeing, had pondered on the common need and impulse back of it all, ever since that early day when she had first wondered which of the mutually inimical was the more dangerous to its foe. Then she had come to learn that even here was found a compromise, a sort of tacit truce, whereby the orders continued on their ways without the utmost of inevitable conflict.

A passing philosopher's chance words in the restaurant, the old wonder of a biblical sage, curiosity with but a modi-

cum of childish cruelty, the mysticism innate within herself—these had helped her gradually to view the sidewinders and scorpions, the things of shell and scale, as of a fraternity in which, somehow, she herself had a humble Franciscan part. And there were even birds . . .

In this, it is true, the negative was ascendant; but in the love she had for the flowers of the desert there was a passion, an esthetic development, which in other setting would have found an expression more exquisite perhaps, but no more poignant.

To the casual eye, the desert is a plain of eternal worn sage and darker greasewood. To the seeing eye, it may be a garden, especially as here, rising above the lower levels. After winter snows and rainfall, inadequate as they are, old earth strives in gratitude and the soil with mighty efforts puts forth tenderness.

For this girl of the desert there were the blossoms of the myriad cacti; there were bluebells and asters. May, now come, had brought her the red mountain tulip, cousin of the tardier white tulip. There were strange greeneries, greyed with the tint of the wastes: squaw cabbage, a reputed delicacy; Indian paint brushes, other plants whose names showed that even here the children had created a nomenclature of their own. Sometimes, on the heights, she found a single thistle of the uplands, a red jewel of a flower, clear and deep, poised on a slender, chased stalk of dull silver.

These were recurrent delights, however: there was with her always a rare joy in the magnificence of the setting itself. At hand, the hills gripped the desert with spurs sublime in their barrenness. Mile on mile the floor of the valley stretched out, its details deceptively clear: the little railroad under the hills opposite Santa Juana, the red station from which the stage brought the passengers; the great sink below, a saucer twenty miles from tip to tip, where they stacked salt on the bed of a dead lake; and above, the deceptive rise of

the plain, up which a mixed train smoked furiously under each afternoon's sun and from whose distance there came at times the glint of rails at a curve. Those trains: climbing, always climbing, past the glaring flanks of the Sierras, up through the Indian Wells country, of which she had heard vaguely, past lakes and forests, puffing on slowly for hundreds of miles: it was of these that she thought, the trains leading to the wonderland beyond the horizon, rather than of the cars that came down, going toward Mojave, whence she herself had come years before, and on to the world which had been hers in the beginning.

A creation apart: and into this had come the little German band whose crude blare was harmonized for her by the desert itself.

A deep inhalation brought to her the flavor of the wilderness in which she had come to see riches: the keen air of the wind-swept trough which, three thousand feet or more above the sea, somehow seemed to lie at the bottom of the world, with all the sky pressing upon it.

The sun now edged against a ridge, and a swift dusk was tinting the hills and levels with colors richer than any gayness. Within the shack, her mother had switched on the lights.

The girl turned. As her hand dropped from the wall she looked at the dentist's sign with blank lines filled in with pen, and for the first time the wording suggested to her not a condition or a half casual, half routine event, but a person, a man.

"Dr. George T. James, D. D. S., begs to announce that he will conduct his office in Santa Juana from May 18 to May 20 . . ."

This was the day he would come.

II

"HELEN."

Her mother called.

The girl moved slowly into the dining-room. Beyond was the kitchen; beyond that, overhanging the valley, a

midden of cans in the foreground, was the single room, crowded with a strange medley of the ornate and the utilitarian, which mother and daughter called home.

At once she set about arranging the tables—two rows of them, three deep, with red-checked cloths. In the center of each was a glass filled with butterfly tulips: the girl's own touch.

"Better hurry up," cautioned Mrs. Brady from the kitchen, and the cutlery jingled.

But Helen was not thinking of the task in hand: she wondered idly if the dentist would dine here on this visit. Yet she had no doubt.

On the false front of the shack there appeared, in black and white, the name of the proprietress and the nature of the establishment. An ice-cream announcement below was flanked by this inheritance from the previous owner, indifferently done in yellow and green: "Español cousine aquí."

Mrs. Brady, taking it with the rest of the house, had added a sufficient knowledge of Spanish dishes to vindicate it. In time had come a passing proficiency: it was this that had first attracted the dentist, as others before him.

Helen remembered now how, after his first meal, he had bantered her mother: "Brady—a fine name for a Spanish cook: but they never made better frijoles."

Helen smiled at the recollection. He seemed to her, in retrospect, an entertaining fellow, and a gentleman.

She wondered what a gentleman was, after all. Had she ever seen a real gentleman? So few men at all approaching the province of gentility had come to her notice, here, in the mining camp.

As she tried to recall them according to her understanding, unwittingly she contrasted each with the travelling dentist. When she realized this she did not smile but justified herself with the defense that he alone of them all did she really know. . . . She had met him five times.

There was the company doctor. He passed every day, on horseback, in puttees and carrying a crop. His figure was the most familiar, yet he had never spoken to her.

Had she been a reader of romances, she might have dreamed upon this man, retaining something of the fop, perhaps defensively, amid the rawness of the camp. But she had never had a book, seldom a magazine.

Then the mine owner himself. A grand person, he came not infrequently, and the camp watched him with a multiplicity of emotion, from deepest loyalty to deepest hate.

Once or twice a traveller, detained, had strolled into the restaurant. But for the most part the men with whom Helen had come in contact were those who boarded at the restaurant: a clerk or two, teamsters, some of the miners. They were men of varying ages, from lads to graybeards, and they followed in common a manner of life in which the taking of food is, however essential or even grateful, a cursory business.

To each of them the young girl, safeguarded by her mother, represented in this out of the way corner of the earth a desirable quality, an appeasement. To them, indeed, she was a note from the eternal song. And yet, though she went among them day by day, her service touching their lives at an elemental point, never once had they awakened in her the stirrings of womanhood.

They began to enter now, as she finished setting the tables. Some greeted her with a nod or a word, a few by name.

At each opening of the door there came clearer a lilting bit of music. The men talked about the band: it was a tremendous joke. Pleased as children, they hid their excitement under laughter at sallies which crudely hit upon the appearance, the comportment, or the mannerisms of the players. The girl laughed, too: still, she felt regret that fun should be poked so at the bandsmen, for after all to her they seemed benefactors. She strained to hear them, and once half opened the door, leaning

against it till her mother recalled her to duty.

The tune was something lively now, one that she did not know, but it thrilled her, setting her aloof to the dining-room, bringing a new pleasure that made her pulses jump. Music: she had never considered it before, had accepted it indefinitely as a part of man's world remote, like all the other achievements through which the race had become articulate. And now was music: a new factor, to make her heart busy with amorphous but poignant emotions and desires.

With more annoyance than she had ever felt toward them before, she turned from the chaffing men.

And then the door opened, under the hand of Dr. James.

As he stood for a moment full under the light, before choosing his seat, she watched him, and the comparisons that had beguiled her a few minutes before resurged swiftly.

"Good evening, Miss Brady."

He alone had ever used the title to her. Before, it had pleased her vanity; now it was inevitably the act of a man apart, one on whom conditions seemed somehow to shape an emphasis.

"It's a wonderful band, eh?"

The remark was for all. From the men it brought acquiescent laughter, but Helen Brady, to whom the band was wonderful indeed, averted her head shyly, almost abashed as she puzzled over the slight.

"You like it?" He asked her directly, faintly divining her thought.

"I think it's lovely," she admitted.

"They're doing pretty well, the boys say."

Again he addressed the company. Talk was a part of his day's work. His manner and dress were those of the professional man of the small town; he was, perhaps, a bit more spruce than most. Yet he had the disadvantage of itineracy, which, if more lucrative as a beginning, forced him to promiscuous affability along his route: at times it made him envy almost with bitterness the dentist whose practice is drawn

from a single community. He bestowed a revengeful and compensatory care upon his tyro's Van Dyke beard.

Helen, having set the dishes before him, frankly regarded his table manners. She wondered if the company doctor used his silverware as did this man; she contrasted him in turn with the boarders, realizing at last how grotesque was their employment of knife and fork. He chatted with her as he ate, of where he had been, where he would go; of Spanish cookery and the weather; he described crop and financial conditions as if she were a man.

"It must be wonderful to go around the country like that," she commented.

"Oh, it gets tiresome, after the first," He was at once blasé.

"Do you stay in all of the towns as long as you do here?"

"In some, a week." His tone was superior. "But then, in others I stay only a few hours. Some day I'll pick out a live town, maybe Bakersfield, and settle down. But I'm doing pretty good now."

Bakersfield—she had heard that it was a great place, an immense.

"Have they many German bands in Bakersfield?" she asked.

He laughed and she felt he was very experienced.

The men were going out now, one by one. At each opening of the door she again heard the band.

As they were left more and more to themselves, his manner became confidential. Of his plans and hopes he spoke more intimately; of his practice, his schooling and his prowess and pranks at college.

She listened intently, striving to see through him to the big world beyond, glad that one such as this had come to her.

"If that goes through," he declared, with a trace of swagger at his own perspicacity, "I won't have to bother with any practice, anywhere."

He was speaking of a trivial gamble in oil lands in the San Joaquin. "Why, it'll be bigger than this."

He pointed a thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the mine domi-

nating the town, the fabulous strike that mining men still talked about from Mexico to Alaska.

The boast called up new visions to Helen Brady: she saw Dr. James in puttees and carrying a crop; she saw him in an automobile, as she remembered the owner of the mine. She pictured him amid such splendors as she knew of.

Remote, visionary, the prospect yet gave her an impression of riches real and vivid. For years she had been close to the source of wealth, but here was the picture visualized for the first time. In sober sympathy, it seemed to her a fine thing that this future might be that of this man, who had called her Miss Brady.

They were alone now: the last of the diners had left, and he talked to her about them, trying to draw her to fuller speech. Shyly she told him her trifling observations and records of events: that there were few boarders because most of the miners, foreigners, "bached" it in shacks, eight and ten together; that the week before someone had given the fire alarm—three shots from a pistol—in the main street, but it had not amounted to much; of how she had found strange bedfellows, a gopher and a snake, in the same burrow.

He interrupted by leaning forward, and his hand touched hers across the red-checked cloth.

"Won't you come up town with me?—there's not always a band," he said.

"I couldn't."

Her answer came automatically. But her mother had nearly always said no before, on the few occasions—she could count them—which had arisen.

"But you must." The dentist was insistent. "Ask your mother."

The girl listened; there was still audible the music, exhilarating, stirring hidden emotions esthetic and still deeper. Then she rose.

Mrs. Brady, red with dishwashing, but benign, guessed it would be all right for a few minutes; yes.

Helen crossed the room briskly, but

the dentist was before her, holding the door open. A door held open for her! She had passed in through it a young girl, sisterly waitress of miners and teamsters.

Now, for the first time, she passed out with a young man holding it open, a professional man, a gentleman, one to whose attentions she had never consciously looked forward. . . . In truth, she had never thought of any at all like this.

III

It was dusk, and the vague tones of a great peace were settling over the desert and its hills, beyond the little cluster of the town's lamps. On the slope beside them, high above, clearly isolated lights of mine and cabin hung like stars.

They advanced in the half light down the rutty street—the one street, no more than a road, with its houses askew or clustering about a whorl where a gully cleft the heart of the town.

It was here that they found the band, standing before the hotel. Miners were lounging about, clerks, storekeepers, those few of the town not directly connected with the digging of gold from under the hills. Here and there was a woman.

The crowd listened indolently to the end of the piece; then, from a murmur and laughter came the shout of a miner, a cry of pleasure with a pretense of mockery to hide the embarrassed ingenuousness. The cry found echo in the heart of Helen Brady, a heart expansive, searching for that which would accord with its intense delight. She looked on bright-eyed in childlike silence while the dentist, his arm through hers, drew her closer.

"You like it?" he asked, amused, and she scarcely heard to nod.

"Then it's worth the two bits," he said as he tossed a quarter into the passing cap of the leader.

A tremor of shyness dispelled the last of her passivity.

They played again and yet again, and through it all the girl stood wordless,

moved by the music, by the dentist's care, by his proximity. Her senses attained an odd swiftness for recording these new emotions, which merged to thrill in mind and body and soul. Here was an opening vista from which the life of the past took on an aspect not devoid of dreariness in contrast with the pleasure of the moment; but the future was all golden haze, with her mountains great glowing gems thick with flowers, and among them a presence walked.

By and by she drew back, tugging at the arm of her escort.

"We must go," she murmured.

He expostulated.

"I promised mama," she answered with simple reluctance, and they started.

For a time he was silent, and the girl was thankful.

Then:

"They're to be here tomorrow."

She did not reply.

"They're going to give a dance tomorrow night. . . . A big dance."

A sudden desire came to her, a longing to dance away all the electric urge that had been created for her by the music, the dusk and the man.

"Will you come?" he asked. "Will you let me take you?"

The restaurant, its pale light upon the road, was near them now.

"Oh, if I can!" she cried, strange hopes trembling in her voice.

She turned her head toward him.

In the darkness he dropped her arm, that he might circle her waist. He drew her to him and kissed her on the lips. Undirected, her hands reached out; the pressure of her arms responded to his, her mouth to his mouth. Then came thought, and she pulled back, frightened at herself yet joyous. She gazed at him an instant, still silent, with the wide eyes that look upon an unsanctioned and ineffable mystery. Abruptly she darted on alone, and her form was lost amid the shadows of her home.

She did not enter at once. Surprise, alarm at her impulse, overwhelmed her.

She hid in a familiar hollow in the hillside. She was alone with her shyness, amazed at the suddenness and the unexpectedness of this spiritual experience. Her mind was fearful of its meaning, but something deeper within her smiled at her quandary.

A man had come near her, and to her in a flash he had been revealed as more than acquaintance, more than friend. She cherished the thought tenderly, pondering, certain only that it was sweet. Portent and revelation, it was beyond her conscious grasp, yet she knew without avowal that she had touched life and elicited a spark of the current.

The pervading quiet of the desert reached to her, enveloped and soothed, and a wind at play brought the far-away music to merge with the singing of her heart. . . . Gradually the flurry of her pulses stilled.

The desert, menacing the interloper with its heat and its cold, its parching

and its cloudbursts and the creatures it nourished. Yet it had warmed her genially; its winds kissed her now and its splendid stars burned as to light her path. It gave forth flowers for her, and strange beauties, and it showed to her the matings and the life of little beings no less a part of the great sphere than the birds and the field dwellers of the gentler lands.

In the starlight, breathing deep of the wind, she cherished it all, this handiwork of nature of which every detail had come to be a part of her own life. Now more than ever was she drawn to it, now did she possess a great peace, feeling herself one with the mysteries at hand.

Man, the intruder; music, carried far on straying wings into the immensity; love, the interpreter—love, even here, in the solitudes . . .

And tomorrow the ball: he was to take her. It seemed so wonderful. Tomorrow . . .



LOVE IN THE WIND

By Odell Shepard

BLOWING as the wind blows
Through the poplar tree—
That's the way that love goes
Trampling you and me.

Tendrils, vein, and filament
In the wind awaken,
Trunk and bough and twig bent,
Buffeted and shaken.

All the blue sky over us
All the grasses under,
Blowing up to cover us
With a wave of wonder.

Flowing as the wind flows
O'er the poplar tree—
That's the way that love goes
Over you and me.

DEVELOPMENTS

By Thomas Effing

I AWOKE in the middle of the night, conscious that a burglar was moving around downstairs. I didn't grab a pistol. On the contrary, I felt sorry for the fellow and awaited developments. I had tried to enter in the dark myself. Presently a crash told me that he had overturned the china closet and then from a prolonged howl I knew he had stepped on the cat's tail. Then he did just what I figured. Groping for the light, he pressed the button that starts our electric piano. I went back to bed as I heard footsteps clattering down the porch steps and running hastily up the road.



IDYLL

By Winifred Welles

NOT the wise quiet pine, nor the amorous, blonde oak,
Nor the tall, pale lady elm tree,
But you, who came invisible in a magic cloak,
You, who were the wind, chose me.

I, the white little birch, who had stood alone, serene,
Content to listen and to stare,
And I never saw your hands that tore my veils of green,
Nor your lips that laughed in my hair.

You held me and kissed me, I knew your strength and grace,
And dreams rose like sap in the spring,
I trembled as with buds but I never saw your face,
I only heard your whispering.

So yawning and careless you went on to field and sea,
So here I am lonely and still—
Oh wind, wind, better to have broken me
Than leave me with roots in the hill.



THE DISADVANTAGES OF BEING A HAPPY WIFE

By Marguerite Mooers Marshall

I

THE truth may as well come out—the shameful, apologetic, undramatic truth. I am that hippogriff, that mythological monster, that unearthly curiosity—a happy wife. Not that I expect you to believe it. Your cynicism, in fact, is my one consolation. So long as it endures, some *flair* of interest may attach to my personality. I shall be delighted if sophisticated readers ascribe my candid recital of the disadvantages of my state to an academic interest in the subject. My friends, alas, will know better! . . . But has a happy wife any friends?

She has not. She has acquaintances, mistrustful and bored. She has—she acquires—a few Victorian admirers, whom she yearns to tie in front of machine-guns. She has her husband—thank the fates, even though he be responsible for the social quarantine which surrounds her. That is all.

It so happened that I was the last of my own group to marry. Several girls I knew, indeed, had been already “renovated” in the milk of jurisprudence before my first and only wedding invitations went out. Every married friend of mine was comfortably, satisfactorily unhappy. Heloise’s husband didn’t understand Freud and Ezra Pound. The man Dorothy married made a scene when he came home early one afternoon and found her giving tea to a Socialist with a brown flannel shirt. Virginia told all of us how her Tom raged when she decided to picket the White House—although he bailed her

out promptly enough. During the war hardly a husband of my acquaintance was willing to let his wife go to France. Not that it made any difference about her going!

Naturally, with all these records of domestic infelicity before my eyes, marrying Dick seemed no rash and uncertain undertaking. After the honeymoon I expected to simmer comfortably on the broiling pan of matrimonial martyrdom. Really, I had gotten a bit tired of being an intelligent audience while Dorothy or Heloise or Virginia sang the saga of their woes. I yearned to unfold a woe or two of my own.

Shall I not confess it? I wanted to confess in print. The secrets of the conjugal prison-house have been pretty well turned inside out by those artists of the third degree, Marna, Helen and the rest. Still, I hoped I might discover—and disclose—a few forgotten bones, a rusty old fetter or two. Perhaps, if I were really clever, I might find in my marriage the material for a book of *vers libre*, which I could have privately printed and bound in hand-tooled leather.

For you good folk who have read all these realistic revelations, who know what marriage is, and what W. L. George says it is, there is no use in describing my honeymoon. I might sum it up by saying that as material for literature it was an abysmal failure. Neither Strindberg nor the magazine page of the New York *Evening Journal* could have done a thing with it. What Dick and I did with it was to prolong it, shamelessly, from one month to six.

We were on his yacht—not a big one, but still a yacht—and he sent an aerogram to his partners, asking them to look after things until further notice. Then he had the wireless dismantled.

When we finally returned to New York Dick had to be an extraordinary busy person. Nevertheless, it seemed so queer not to see each other from morning till night that, two or three times a week, I used to slip downtown and meet him for lunch. (I hope editorial credulity and that of the public will not crack under the strain. I am telling what happened—and happens.)

Heloise telephoned me the morning of the day I had promised to meet Dick at our favorite chop-house in John Street.

"Constance, dear," she urged, "I haven't seen you for a real talk since you came back. Do come and have lunch with me today."

"I'm so sorry I can't," I replied, adding with thoughtless candor, "I have an engagement with my husband."

"Oh-h-h!" From the telephone receiver was diffused an aroma of intimate understanding. "For tea, then, dear? You can? I'll expect you. Good-bye."

When I arrived at Heloise's Park Avenue apartment I was shown at once into her boudoir, where the tea-things were laid out.

"I thought we could talk better, here," my friend said softly, after putting me in a chair close to her own. It occurred to me that her expression was the glance of the cat just *before* he swallows the canary, the pre-gorge look.

"And now tell me *all* about it, poor darling!"

I shuddered. I reached wildly for a sandwich and bit it—even though I knew I was obtaining hospitality under false pretenses. I understood what was expected of me. I comprehended wherein I was about to fail, to brand myself as of the prehistoric feminine.

"Wh-wh-why," I stammered humbly, "I'm very happy!"

"Oh, of course, we all say it once," she returned, with a trace of im-

patience. "But surely we are good friends, Constance, and you can tell me just what it feels like to be married to a caveman. We never had one in our set before. What a perfectly frightful, thrilling time you must have had on that cruise! Did he bar the door of your stateroom every night to keep you from slipping a note telling of your sufferings into the hands of the faithful sailing-master? I suppose there was a faithful sailing-master, or a mate or—somebody. Your mother said that for days you didn't touch land. I suppose that was because of his appalling jealousy. And even here in New York he makes you go to lunch with him? I never heard of anything like it. Are you followed by detectives? Does he"—her voice took on the intonation of one who tells a ghost-story—"does he—*beat* you?"

Never in my life did I make such hard work of a lie as I did of the truth I told her. I ought to have lied. Anybody ought to tell a dramatic lie when life rolls up the curtain for it.

Instead, I painfully admitted that my three months' honeymoon had been too short for me; that while Dick and I managed to get along in public without park-bench love-making we still felt we owned a private and incorporated Eden; that, in short, we amused each other more than either of us had ever succeeded in amusing or being amused by anybody else.

Heloise interrupted me at this point.

"You shall be the first to hear the truth," she declared magnificently. "Jack and I are going to separate. He doesn't understand me, and I have been psycho-analyzing my dreams for the last few weeks. My sub-conscious self has told me that I need something else in my life. I don't know who he is yet, although"—her tone grew wistful—"I have wondered if a caveman would be the next stage in my evolution. That's why I wanted to know—how yours acts. Jack doesn't want me to get my divorce until he puts through his next oil deal, so that he won't be so short of money as he is now. He would feel

ashamed to give me less alimony than Curtis Hughes gave Bess. So nothing will happen immediately, but I am not keeping anything back from you. Now don't you think you might tell me the *truth* about your married life?"

Happiness must be most uncivilizing in its effects. For a moment I reverted to cave, cat and claws.

"Maybe a caveman will be the next stage in your evolution, Heloise," I said, "but he won't be *my* caveman. Not that Dick is one; he's the kindest, cleverest, dearest person in the world. And he's *mine*. Hands off!"

There is this to be said for the primitive emotions—they get across. My flash of jealous rage—with all intellectual humility, I confess it was as old-fashioned as that—convinced Heloise, as my protestations had failed to do.

For the few moments during which I finished my cup of tea she handled me as one handles an influenza patient—with a mask and a compassionate smile.

II

REPENTANTLY, for our families had always been friends, I asked her to lunch that day week. She had an engagement—by the time my suggestion was finished. I may be blatantly in love with my own husband, but I still have the wit to detect the Minerva engagement, springing full-grown from the brain when an unwelcome or boresome invitation is given. My intuition was confirmed when I mentioned one or two other dates and Heloise evaded them by referring to indefinite "plans"—she thought she might go to Asheville soon.

I came away with what the novelists call "mingled emotions." I was a trifle hurt by my old friend's sudden indifference, yet a set of stubborn nerve ganglia still throbbled with resentment at the idea of Dick as Mr. Heloise No. 2.

My divagation from the trodden path of marital wretchedness was duly reported by Heloise to the other women we know. Some believed. Others

coffed. There was a tacit agreement that, fatuous pose or fatuous fact, my abnormal satisfaction with my lot must make me a social solecism, a blight on the boudoir, as it were. Therefore have my women friends become mere acquaintances.

At parties, to which both Dick and I are invited, I have to watch the silliest woman present drag Dick to the punch-bowl and then drink out of his glass. Or perhaps she rushes up and informs me, with a dagger glance of indignation, that he is sitting out a dance on the stairs with another woman. Not that Dick gives me any real cause for jealousy. Communism in husbands is simply our modern custom—and it makes a happy wife long to go back to the days when married folk went two by two, like the animals in Noah's ark.

A disadvantage of domestic felicity even worse than the predatory females is the person who admires me for the wrong reasons. When I go to lunch with my husband because he amuses me more than any other man I know, I do not like to have his sister-in-law, who never receives a divorcée, warmly commend me as the only woman of her acquaintance who has a sense of wifely duty.

When my godfather, who is a sort of elderly Dobbin, asks me if I intend to run over to Paris next spring and I answer thoughtlessly that it will all depend on whether Dick can get away, I writhe under his assurance that, by gad, I'm a wife in a thousand and know my place is by my husband's side!

I do not know it. I only know I have more fun when Dick is around—so isn't it logical to stay in the same country with him? I am willing to be called a romanticist. But to be accused of having a conscience, a sense of duty, a realization that woman's place is in the home, by Victorians on whose ideas I trample, whose conceptions of art, literature, house decoration and politics make my soul crawl—well, it is enough to drive me to get a divorce as a proof of my feminism!

Even the ever-exasperating servant

problem is intensified for me by the fact that Dick and I, between us, cannot construct a really interesting disagreement. You remember the rich drama of life the servants extracted from the complications of their betters in that realistic play of life on Long Island, "Upstairs and Down." I find the polite comedy of my own household wears terribly on the nerves of my servants.

My maid, who came to me when I was married, and who is a treasure, told me the other day that she would leave at the end of the month. She had been growing quieter and more subdued for some time, and I talked to her as kindly as I could, thinking she might be in some trouble.

It all came out. The placidity of my home was too stupefying. The husband of her last mistress used to swear till your blood run cold, and once she threw a pink marble egg at him. The penultimate master and mistress quarrelled furiously at least once a month about a young man. It was as good as a play. ("No, indeed, madam, I never listened, but you could hear all over the house. The cook says, madam, that in this house she never hears anybody holler.")

Therefore Marie goes elsewhere, to weave into her neutral, impeccable life some threads of vicarious passion and color.

The disadvantage of not having a little problem in my marriage is emphasized whenever I see a "gripping" play or read a "darkly realistic" novel of married life. Once more my reaction is curiously compounded. I am humbly conscious that my own destiny misses much of the purgation by pity and terror for which Aristotle so highly commends tragedy. Yet in my brain a

little, leaping devil of humorous tact is ever asking, "Why doesn't the injured wife of the drama and of fiction have a simple explanation with her husband in Act or Chapter I, and so prevent a temporary misunderstanding from developing into a permanent grouch—and another 'compelling human document'?"

III

No doubt you continue to disbelieve in my existence. You must perceive, however, that, granting my incarnation in human form, my disadvantages are well-nigh insuperable.

What can I do? I have made a resolve. Out of the ether, as a child draws a trinket from a Jack Horner pie, I shall pluck a *tertium quid*, a *bel ami*, a realization of the desire of my sub-conscious self. Yes, you have guessed it—his name will be Mr. Harris. With his incorporeal assistance I shall have, and give, all sorts of pleasant items for the dove functions, at which I once more shall be a welcome guest. I shall wave his name like a red flag in the faces of my godfather and my sister-in-law. I shall leave letters from him where Marie can read them. In the third act of the problem play I shall keep myself awake by thinking, "Mr. Harris would make love more effectively than that tame cat."

Happy the marriage that has neither history nor drama—but such a bore it is for the neighbors, one's friends and the servants! Behind the smoke screen of the hypothetical Mr. Harris—who will keep them all busy and happy—perhaps even that paleozoic survival, a happy wife, may yet find peace with honor.



MABEL, GLADYS AND HERBERT

By Helen Dwight Fisher

I
THE central figure of this truly shocking affair was Mabel. She was tall, with a slim, swaying figure; a great deal of dark hair, which she piled high in a barbaric, uncombed fashion; soft, heavy brown eyes; a white skin, and a wide, very red mouth.

Rather like an ultra-modern poster was Mabel, and yet with nothing hard or lined about her, and nothing consciously sophisticated. She was all curves, soft but not mushy, and above all simple, just as life had made her.

She had once been a waitress in an ice-cream parlor in a college town, but she was shy of telling you this, for later developments had taught her that all persons do not esteem waitresses.

But in her early days she had no such reticences. It never occurred to her that she was not of the best. In fact she had all the calm assurance of a personage. Perhaps she did chew gum too vociferously; perhaps she did have an ungoverned nasal voice and talk a jargon that was far from the King's English. But what were these things to the college youth, so long as she swayed to and fro among the tables, bringing them the syrupy mixtures they desired, and smiling with her wide, very red mouth? As a waitress Mabel was a distinct success, took her triumphs calmly, and was happy.

But eventually one of the youth, the son of a Southern magnate, fell so much in love with her that he wanted ardently and instantly to marry her.

Mabel was yielding—why not?—but it was the busy season and her boss objected loudly to her quitting, so that it happened that before she had irrevocably

ably left her ice-cream parlor for matrimony, the boy's family got wind of the affair and came to look things over. And of course Mabel would not do.

It was obvious, however, that Son's ardor could not be cooled by any mere refusal to tolerate her, so his mother took a subtler course. She first removed Mabel from the congenial atmosphere of the ice-cream parlor to spend a few days in the most pretentious hotel in town.

Life for Mabel immediately became a nightmare of intricate meals, the kind of a nightmare in which you try to eat rich foods but cannot find a fork or spoon, or possibly you have too many forks and spoons and the viand before you appears impregnable. No matter what Mabel did with her forks and knives and spoons, she was sure all the waiters were laughing at her. And while she was still dazed by the atmosphere of upholstery and hushed service, the mother explained to her, not gently, perhaps, but in painstaking detail, why in her present unlearned, unpolished state she was unfit to become the wife of a Southern gentleman.

Then hastily, before Mabel had time to be either resentful or crushed, she announced that for her darling boy's sake she, the mother, would take Mabel under her protecting wing and send her for a year to a small but worthy boarding-school, where she could learn all that a rich man's wife should know and come forth polished, even as the hotel doorknobs.

Naturally Son did not take to this. What he wanted was Mabel as she was and right away—and his mother knew it. Mabel knew it, too, in her slow,

simple way, but she seemed unable to do anything about it. Had she been one of those dauntless creatures who master their own fates, she might have scorned the futility of the thing and gone coldly back to her ice-cream parlor.

But Mabel was always putty in the hands of fate—and her mother-in-law-to-be, with her diamonds, her grand, sugar-sweet manner, and her smooth brutality, completely overawed her. So she wept a little in private, remonstrated with Son that his mother knew better than they and probably it was all for the best, and then went meekly to the small but worthy school, for the first time in her life lacking in self-assurance.

And there she met the other two.

II

GLADYS was small, red-haired, and interested in temperament.

"Life," she said, while explaining the universe to Mabel, "Life is a wonderful thing!"

And then again she said life was just one damned thing after another. It all depended on the weather, the mail, and like mutable phenomena. She preferred to be called "Glad" because it seemed to her romantic, yet she did not aspire to the gladsome disposition but enjoyed fancying herself morose, loving to dwell on the tragic aspects of her childhood.

Her father, she was proud to say, was steward of a famous New York hotel. He had married her mother tempestuously after having known her just three days when she was sixteen and he thirty, and they never got on for more than three days at a time thereafter.

Glad's childhood was a series of ruptures and reconciliations, during which she was dragged from pillar to post. Finally her mother ran away with a guest in the hotel, caught cold in the haste of her flight, and died of pneumonia in a Middle-Western sanitarium just after having dictated a letter to

Glad's father begging him to forgive her, assuring him that she had never truly loved another, and beseeching him, if he had ever cared for her, to cherish in her little girl's memory of her mother "all that is good and beautiful."

This event left Glad's father with an embittered though sentimental view of women, and furnished Glad herself with unlimited cause for temperament. She firmly believed that she understood life better than most people, passing for what is known in school parlance as an "intense" character. And you can imagine how she seized upon the untutored Mabel as one who must be shown the Truth.

For the most part Mabel paid her little serious attention, and yet Glad was undoubtedly her closest companion in that small but worthy school. The rest of the girls bored her; of Glad she said, "Let her rave!"

Mabel had come there dulled and chastened in spirit and was set to work on the enlivening study of spelling and English grammar. She discovered early in the game that if she opened her mouth some silly creature was sure to giggle, so she sullenly kept her mouth closed unless especially roused. She developed a haughty, defensive attitude which was usually the only expression she gave to the instinctive scorn she felt for the whole place.

To her mind it was all utterly inane. She had come there to be taught a better way of living, and what had she found? A crowd of silly girls and institutionalized spinsters who lived by a series of senseless taboos and had not the slightest acquaintance with the world as she knew it. She could not even join with the girls in their chimerical love affairs, desperate flirtations with drug-clerks and passing school-boys.

"Huh, there's nothin' in it!" she said scornfully. "You gotta show me the real thing—an' believe me, I know the real thing when I see it!"

Yet I must say for Mabel that she was clever enough to recognize that she

was in the minority, and so to learn a good deal from the majority. She became so careful of her speech that, except when unduly agitated, she used a perfectly colorless, proper but limited vocabulary and talked a fairly good imitation of Miss Gould, the English teacher. Her lack of assurance kept her voice low and gave her tones a restrained, thick quality that suggested force.

She learned, also, to do her hair in a new, smooth fashion, and to chew with her mouth shut. Her long, slim body looked well in the school uniform, and, having little else to do, she took infinite pains with her nails and complexion. The result was that with her sullen aloofness she was by far the most dignified of the students and had positively an air. And if you will reflect on her physical endowments, you will realize what a striking figure she might be, lonely and quite individual in the hodgepodge of half-grown girls.

This, of course, is where Herbert comes in, although he never laid eyes on Mabel for months after she came to the school.

Herbert was, I grieve to say, the exclusive property of Gladys, or so she believed, for she was officially engaged to him. I have never known how much they were really engaged, but the story was that their fathers, being close friends, had decided that it would be well if their children married each other and so Herbert and Glad were engaged. Glad was perfectly willing, except in moments when she felt she could never trust any man and was sure marriage was "the great disillusionment." And Herbert never showed any active signs of dissent, although neither did he show vast enthusiasm.

He was an amiable youth whose motto seemed to be, "We strive to please." The teachers felt that he was "manly" and the kind one wanted around the school, for he was not only infallibly polite, but obviously well off and had the air of a man of the world. He had never done anything decisive, so far as I could discover, except to re-

fuse to go to college because it bored him. He went docilely through a famous school for the sons of the wealthy and came forth polite, sophisticated, utterly correct on the surface, but obdurate in the matter of college.

So finally his father, who was a rich New York fur-merchant and the best friend of Glad's father, accepted the situation, giving Herbert a desk in his private office, a good-sized salary, and the freedom of New York outside the hours of nine to five, when he occupied the desk.

When I first saw Herbert he had been out of school a year and was twenty-one and still utterly correct on the surface. There seemed to be no good reason for his periodic calls on Gladys except that they were proper and expected of him. He never gave evidence of being in love with her, but you felt that he would marry her some day because it was so decreed.

There was certainly nothing revolutionary about Herbert, and yet I always suspected him in spite of that bland exterior. This may have been simply because he was too handsome, with sensuous curves about his thin, politely smiling mouth, a rather scornful lift to his nostrils, and a secretive droop about his eyes—clear, Irish eyes, I must admit, that looked innocent enough.

At any rate he always appeared to me too correct and too amiable. People simply are not that way! It was as if he had a highly polished, very beautiful shell behind which there might dwell anything—but surely something. And I knew he never let Glad inside the shell.

She talked, however, not only as if she understood him to the last curve, but positively as if he were her own creation. For this reason she spent a good deal of time telling what an absurd creature he was and how little she esteemed him, although no one else, of course, might take such liberties with Herbert, and if Mabel ventured to hold opinions on him Glad quickly put her in her place.

"My dear Mabel," she said haughtily,

"how can you expect to understand a man of Herbert's type?"

But then,

"Herbert is so naïve!" she complained. "He has no interest in life, and when I try to talk with him about it, he only says, 'Why worry?'"

This she felt was characteristic of men.

"They have no idea what it is to be a woman! They don't know what a complex creature she is—and how full of moods!"

Then usually she added that she wasn't sure she could marry Herbert "in spite of his devotion."

"After all if one marries, one loses all one's illusions."

Another *bon mot* of hers was that marriage was the death-knell of development and the murder of romance. She had a great deal to say about marriage and much of it sounded well, for she was an avid reader of erotic fiction and good at picking up phrases.

Her particular followers among the girls listened in open-mouthed appreciation, but strangely enough it was on this very subject, about which she had the most to say, that she could least impress the simple Mabel. Mabel had her limits of endurance, and from the start one of these was Herbert.

"Honest, she makes me sick!" she said. "She better grab that Herbert while the grabbin's good, an' quit her jawin'. She needn't give me that line about not bein' able to bear to marry him! Gee, she makes me tired!"

And by the completeness of her relapse into her old vernacular, you could measure the depth of her irritation. But it was not because she cared what happened to Glad or Herbert, whom she had never seen except from the third-story window, that she was annoyed. It was that she was blindly, uncomprehendingly disgusted with her own predicament, and Glad's attitude seemed to typify the futility of life in general.

For Mabel was realizing more and more how useless all this school-going was so far as her own marriage was

concerned—and if she was not to be married, what was she to do?

III

THE girls had a way of gathering in Glad's room of a Sunday evening for uplifting conversation on love, marriage, and Herbert, and Mabel usually drifted in with them. She stood it just so long each time and then arose to say wrathfully, "My God, you little fools!" and stride out.

This gave Glad an excellent opportunity to enlarge on how little Mabel understood life and how insensible she was to its finer aspects. They must bear with Mabel, she felt, for she was here to be improved by association with them and their cultured viewpoint. And so there grew up a cult for patronizing Mabel and leading her in paths of right, which might have driven a less simple person to something more than words.

But Mabel did not care. Let them rave! She took it all as merely one more evidence of the absurdity of this place in which she had been dropped for her own good, and retired, when things became too much for her, to her own room to gaze sadly on the picture of her once-ardent fiancé.

She seldom wrote to him, partly because she realized her illiteracy and was afraid to give him too much evidence of it, and partly because she was naturally inarticulate, and he seldom wrote to her because he was too busy. So there was practically no communication between them, it being a part of the plan that he should not see her until the year was out, and it was no wonder that Mabel lapsed into apathy on the subject.

"There's nothing in it," she said dully, on one of the few occasions when she unburdened herself. "He won't marry me when I get out of here. I'll be kind of different and maybe he won't like me so well. Besides he's playing around while I'm locked up in this jail and maybe he'll find someone he likes better. There's nothing in putting these things off."

Yet it never occurred to her not to stick the year out. Putty, as usual, she had not the force to extricate herself, but said simply, "You've got to see things through," as if it were the last word.

She was unhappy, in her inarticulate way, there was no doubt of that. But it was not so much the loss of her lover (what was a lover here or there?) that troubled her, as the fact that her life had become twisted and complicated.

It was no longer the direct, simple thing of her ice-cream parlor days. She had been plucked out of the natural course and thrust into a maze of senseless activities where she was supposed to learn things she cared nothing about and to deal with persons who were absurdly lacking in common sense, according to her standards. And it was because she so resented the complication of her own life that it literally enraged her to hear Glad's attempts to complicate hers.

She became an ardent champion of Herbert, not at all because she was interested in him personally, but because she carried an eternal chip on her shoulder in regard to him in place of the one she might have carried in regard to herself. And Glad, of course, never relaxed her missionary work, so that there arose a tradition in the school that she had a "wonderful influence" on Mabel and miraculously "understood her," all of which made Mabel's subsequent conduct only the more reprehensible.

Meantime, although Mabel and Herbert never met, I am sure Glad must have told him something about her, probably just enough to bore him.

I have no first-hand information on this point because all his very proper calls were invested in inviolable privacy. If the respectable standards of the school had allowed it, Glad would have received him under dimmed lights in a far, hushed corner. As it was, on calling nights she dragged him hastily to the most remote sofa where they were supposed to partake of the soft,

sweet nothings appropriate to engaged persons.

Herbert never looked in the least as if he were partaking of anything soft or sweet. Instead he frequently looked slightly bored. But Glad did most of the talking and the other conversing couples, sprinkled discreetly over the reception hall under the eyes of a flitting teacher or two, gazed on them with awe, as on two far more experienced than they.

But for all this sweet privacy, I know Mabel must have entered into their conversations, for Glad would never let escape her such a chance to show herself as the sophisticated teacher of the innocent.

I can imagine how she contrasted Mabel's crude simplicity with her own fine wisdom, and Herbert, just to change the subject, may well have inquired what Mabel looked like anyhow. To which Glad would undoubtedly reply that whereas some persons might consider her striking, she inclined to coarseness, and anyone could see that she was not a lady. And Herbert probably muttered, "I'd like to see this bird!" thinking the while what fools girls are.

He did not see the bird, not even at the third-story window where she effectively concealed herself behind other peering maidens, until the night of the memorable Senior Dance. This was Mabel's first appearance before the school public—and her last, thanks to Herbert. Heretofore it had been considered unsafe to allow her to attend functions, lest she disgrace the school, but now, as the end of the year approached and she seemed to have acquired a surprising amount of poise, it was decided to give her a trial, distributing her dances discreetly among certain carefully selected brothers and—oh, foolish virgins!—the correct Herbert.

She arrived at the dance inconspicuously enough with the rest of the girls, and yet, as might be expected, she distinctly "stood out" as something quite different from the rest, but she was not

the one who suffered by the difference.

I can imagine how Herbert felt about it if he remembered any derogatory remarks from Glad on Mabel's personal appearance. She had her hair piled high again, for some reason, and was more posteresque than ever. But there was nothing crude about her; she looked a finished product, though I grant you she was not artificial, and no one would ever have guessed that her calm dignity was entirely defensive.

I made a mental note that she was looking well that evening and no one need be ashamed of her, but thought no more of her until I happened to see her dancing with one of the most harmless brothers in the place. He was a snub-nosed, fattish, perspiring youth, who danced conscientiously, his jaw set in the painful determination to do his best, and Mabel was as bored as a queen condescending to a yokel. I could almost hear her muttering, "Ain't he the human limit?"

But how she danced in spite of him! Dancing may have been taught in the ice-cream parlor—or it may be a natural gift. At any rate, Mabel was dancing as softly and gaily as leaves in a May wind.

I regret to say that I did not notice her first dance with Herbert, but it suddenly came over me that Mabel and Herbert were dancing together most of the time. Glad, when she danced, was the jumpy kind, so that Herbert, who was long and gliding, seemed always to be holding her down. With Mabel it was different. They danced quietly, rhythmically, as if they had been made for it, and as if there were no question of effort or volition about it.

Apparently they spoke very little, but Mabel seemed to have lost some of her defensive dignity and was a much more natural creature than I had seen her in a long while, and Herbert had an air of proud proprietorship, which, had I stopped to think of it, I might have known was dangerous. Even as Glad felt that Herbert was her creation, so Herbert, discovering Mabel so unex-

pectedly in the arid wastes of the small but worthy boarding-school, felt as if he himself had made her, and was indeed proud of his handiwork.

The thing did not become at once an open scandal because Herbert did not immediately lose his sense of the proprieties, and because no one so much as dreamed that the lowly, innocent Mabel could really interest Glad's perfect Herbert.

But Herbert was clever and determined beyond anything I had ever expected of him. He danced with Glad when necessary, but cut, exchanged, and stole dances with such ingenuity that he danced with Mabel about three times as often as he had any business to.

Mabel said nothing and did nothing. She took the thing as calmly as she had her triumphs of the ice-cream parlor, expecting nothing of Herbert and yet accepting his attentions regally as her due.

And Herbert said nothing—except to Mabel. Only Glad made a point of remarking frequently how perfectly sweet it was of Herbert to be so good to Mabel. It seemed to me that anyone but Glad might have seen something besides mere kindness in the smiles Herbert bestowed on Mabel and, too, something very surprising in the fact that from the start they behaved unconsciously as if there were something between them.

A round-eyed child at my elbow, discovering this, said:

"Well, really, to see Mabel, you'd think she'd known him all her life."

"Perhaps she has," I ventured.

"Oh, but she couldn't," said the child, more round-eyed than ever. "Why, she was brought up in an ice-cream parlor or something!"

After supper, which Herbert and Mabel ate pleasantly with Glad and the snub-nosed, fattish brother who was really Mabel's partner, Glad finally did decide that possibly Herbert was being too kind to Mabel.

"Really, he ought to be careful," she

said. "It will be terrible for Mabel if she gets to thinking she's making a real hit—the let-down, you know."

I did not tell her that I had overheard Herbert saying to Mabel a moment before, "Come on out to the porch, Mabel. I'm sick of these kids!" not at all as if he intended to let her down, and events came so thick and fast thereafter, that Gladys's never succeeded in warning Herbert to have a care.

IV

I REGRET, here, that I must digress slightly, leaving Mabel and Herbert comfortably outside upon the porch. Things would never have been as they were, I am sure, had not Glad just at this time allowed herself to become entangled in quite another affair.

Her room-mate, a gay maiden of many beaux, was spending a busy evening, and there was a certain tall, anemic youth from town who was supposed to cherish a hopeless passion for her. She had been openly neglecting him in favor of a merry soul with extremely sleek hair and very pointed pumps, when suddenly the tall, anemic lover turned ardent attentions to Glad.

Glad, need I say, was flattered. Here was something unexpected and exciting. She and her roommate would talk into the wee, sma' hours over this, so she received the anemic one with open arms, as it were, forgetting for the moment her own private Herbert, and leaving him entirely unfettered, to sit in the shadows of the porch and make the acquaintance of Mabel.

Just at the time when certain leading spirits were eagerly begging the Head to give them one more extra and let the dance run until twelve-fifteen at least, the room-mate came to the conclusion that perhaps she did return the anemic one's passion, and Glad was suddenly led to consider her long-forgotten dance-card and remember the deflections of Herbert.

She looked about and saw that he was not in the room. The porches also

she surveyed hastily, and appeared at my side exactly at the beginning of the last dance, saying breathlessly:

"I can't find them anywhere!"

The piazzas are supposed to be well policed at these school dances and it is a heinous crime to go down into the grounds, so that I thought she had simply overlooked them in her haste. But when I saw that she was right and they were not to be found, it dawned upon me that this might be serious and I returned to report to the Head. She seemed to guess the truth instantly, for she rushed quickly out, ordering her minions to search the grounds and leaving the orchestra to play "Home, Sweet Home" endlessly at the behest of the delighted dancers.

It was a waiting chauffeur who finally broke the news. He said that a young gentleman had come out some time ago and driven his car around to the side door where a tall, young lady stepped in.

"She wasn't a bit flustered," he said, "so I thought it was all right their going off that way."

And then being a sentimental chauffeur he added that the young gentleman kissed the young lady several times before bothering to drive away.

A glance at Mabel's room confirmed this tale, for her bureau drawers were recklessly dumped, her closet was open, showing such confusion as would have set her back at least twenty marks in neatness had she been present, but she and her hat, coat and suitcase were all too obviously absent. Fate had once more been too strong for her, and she and the utterly correct Herbert had successfully and irrevocably removed themselves from that small but worthy school.

You can imagine what an uproar this created even after we heard with some relief that they were really properly married by an obliging parson in the next town. But such a thing had never happened in the school before, and if I mistake not, it will never happen again, for the Head's first comment was, wearily, that it did not pay to take these

very mature girls, no matter who asked you to and what they paid.

Gladys of course had her innings. For a little while she was so frankly dazed that she forgot even to show her famous intensity, but the school with one accord proclaimed that in so betraying one who had been so good to her as Glad, Mabel had proved once and for all what she was, and shortly Glad was revelling in the role of a tragic heroine. She said she thought it lucky that she discovered Herbert's low tastes before it was too late, and added with a weary air of experience, that after all there were other things in life than marriage.

Meantime I suspect that the mother of Mabel's erstwhile fiancé must have been smiling secretly, and I presume Son himself felt that it really simplified matters a good deal.

But there was never any adequate explanation of the thing unless you call Mabel's very characteristic letter an explanation.

This came almost a week after the dance and was written on the stationery of Glad's father's famous hotel.

"Dear Glad," (wrote Mabel),

"Honest, I had to do it. He's nuts

about me, and you've got to take what's coming to you.

*"Lovingly yours,
"Mabel."*

Of course, I suppose, in the interests of decency I should close by telling you that Mabel and Herbert fought within a week and were in the divorce courts in less than a year. But such is not the case, though I am the last to condone their rash act.

All this, I have to confess, happened a long, long time ago, and I was only reminded of it by seeing Herbert and Mabel ride placidly by in their prosperous limousine. They have both grown very stout and look so middle-aged and settled that no one would suspect them of an impulsive youth, but she still wears effectively the diamonds and furs he showers upon her.

As for Glad, the last time I saw her she was wearing a Nile green silk smock and a fur hat that was supposed to be extremely Russian, and when I asked what she was doing she replied with thrilling emphasis, "Just living!" She has a dim, romantic studio somewhere and she told me once more with her air of experience that after all there were other things in life than marriage.



UNFORTUNATELY for most men, the women they love die the day they marry them.



THE hardest girl to teach how to swim is the one who has been taught before.



NEVER reason with a woman; it is better to make excuses.

THE RABBIT-HUTCH

By George Sterling

Time:—A warm July morning.

Scene:—A rabbit-hutch containing two score Belgian hares, large and small. It is placed under a great elm tree, in the backyard of a dingy dwelling. A short thin man of about fifty years is placing cabbage leaves in one of the compartments of the hutch.

THE LITTLEST HARE
Father, who is that?

THE OLDEST HARE
That is God, my child.

THE LITTLEST HARE
What does that mean?

THE OLDEST HARE
It means that He is all-wise, all-powerful, all-good; that He watches over every action, and rewards and punishes us according to our deserts.

THE MOTHER HARE
That is true, my son. Never forget what your father has told you!

THE MAN
Guess that old buck will hafta go.

THE LITTLEST HARE
What is he saying, father?

THE OLDEST HARE
Hush, my son! His counsels are inscrutable. None shall penetrate to His designs.

THE LITTLEST HARE
(*Nibbling a cabbage leaf*) Oh! father! how good is the food with which He provides us!

THE MOTHER HARE
Give thanks to Him, my son, for He does this out of His great love, who

might otherwise permit you to perish utterly.

THE MAN
Dam hawgs—! How they do git away with it!

THE LITTLEST HARE
Oh father! He spoke again!

THE MOTHER HARE
Infinite is His wisdom, my dear child. (*A small boy appears. The elder hares promptly retreat as far as possible. He picks up a slender stick, and after a look at The Man, who is now busy at the other end of the hutch, he thrusts it between the wires and gives the Littlest Hare a sharp poke.*)

THE LITTLEST HARE
Oh mother! What was that? I feel bad, mother! I do not like to feel like this!

THE MOTHER HARE
Hush, my child! That which you feel is pain. It is sent to you for your own good, to teach and ennoble.

THE OLDEST HARE
It is God's greatest gift to you, my son, looked at in the proper spirit. So thank Him for it.

THE LITTLEST HARE
Ai! Ai! Ai! I do not like it! Still I feel bad. Is that other man a god also?

THE OLDEST HARE

Be still, my son! You blaspheme. He is God's opposite, even the Adversary of Him and His hares.

THE LITTLEST HARE

Why then, father, does God permit him to live and hurt us?

THE MOTHER HARE

That is one of His mysteries. Presume not to question His goodness and His wisdom. He knoweth best, and doeth all things well.

[The boy obtains a longer stick, with which he prods the oldest hare violently.]

THE OLDEST HARE

Ugh! Ow! Wah! Thou knowest best indeed, O God! But suffer thy servant to escape evil for the moment!

THE MAN

(Noticing the boy): Git outa here, ya little devil! Hain't I told ya to leave them hares alone?
[Exit boy.]

THE OLDEST HARE

Ha, my son! said I not so? I called upon the Lord and He delivered me. So answereth He the prayers of the just.

THE LITTLEST HARE

But why, father, did He permit the Adversary to draw near us at all?

THE OLDEST HARE

Silence! Who are you to question His designs?

THE MOTHER HARE

By these pains, my son, He maketh us aware of His mercy and His vigilance. Behold! He shall not fail us!

THE LITTLEST HARE

But why can't He do all that without hurting us? Seems to me He gets all the notice and we get all the pain.

THE OLDEST HARE

Blasphemer! Be still! Shall a portion question the Whole?

[He kicks the Littlest Hare, who retires in shame and confusion to a corner of the compartment. The

Man re-appears, departing with a plump hare in either hand. He vanishes behind a woodpile, and soon two dull blows are heard.]

THE LITTLEST HARE

Oh father! where have my uncles gone? God has taken with Him two of my uncles! Will they not return?

THE OLDEST HARE

I think it unlikely, but question Him not. They go with Him to the Great Hutch, there to dine forever on freshest cabbage, and on viands of which we cannot even dream. They shall have innumerable descendants, and shall praise Him forever and ever.

THE LITTLEST HARE

How know you this, father?

THE OLDEST HARE

It was told me by my father, who had it from his father, who had it from his.

THE MOTHER HARE

So you see, my child, that it must be true, for what is your wisdom compared to theirs? You must have faith!

THE LITTLEST HARE

I believe, mother! I believe! How beautiful is faith!

THE OLDEST HARE

Yea! He doeth all things well!

[The Man re-appears, wiping his hands on his trousers. He gazes with solemnity at the Oldest Hare, who shudders visibly, and retreats to the farthest confines of the compartment.]

THE LITTLEST HARE

(Nibbling at a fresh cabbage leaf.) Thou art all good, O God! There is none like unto Thee in mercy and wisdom. How sweet are thy cabbage leaves! How glorious must be Thy Great Hutch! Suffer the Adversary to come not nigh unto me, for I am of Thy children!

THE MAN

That's right! Stuff it down, ya little hawg!

A STORY WITHOUT A MORAL

By James Shannon

DUSSOSOIT lolled back in the deep-cushioned lounge. He blinked lazily at the purring fire, stole a glance at the rain-swept windows, and listened for a moment to the wash of the wind-haunted sea as it crashed on the beach below the bungalow. Then he ran an appreciative eye over the long shadowy room with its wealth of old editions and its rare, colorful prints.

"It is lovely," he said. "It is lovely as a woman, all shadows and mystery and subtle color. I could marry a room like this."

"Walter Rainey did," I replied. "That is the reason I am now here. He is in Honolulu and Catherine is in the East waiting for the divorce."

Dussosoit tossed a cedar log on the fire. The flames licked up the chimney.

"Incompatibility of temperament, I suppose?" he said. "Walter was a born Bohemian in his tastes; Catherine was a Puritan. Like attracts unlike, but they don't amalgamate."

"It was the gods," I said. "Walter married for money. The gods will not stand for that. He was tired of being a promising young artist and he married Catherine because he knew she could put him where he wanted to be."

"Blame it on the gods," sneered Dussosoit; "make the facts fit your theory. Such is the legal mind."

That was like Dussosoit. He is a writer and affects to despise lawyers. I am a lawyer and consider myself as well-versed in the vagaries of human nature as any scribbler of weird, pointless stories. Dussosoit's stories are always without point. I tell him this and he replies that life is generally without

point. I cannot accept this as a principle even of story telling. And human nature—life—is my business as well as his.

"It is the legal mind, as you call," I replied, "to draw a general principle from proved and ever-recurring facts. Did you ever know of a man to marry for money that retribution was not certain to follow?"

Dussosoit laughed unpleasantly.

There is something of the satyr in Dussosoit, something in his keen, Gallic eyes that grins and mocks at the dearly held conventions of society.

"He who commits matrimony must suffer the penalty," he retorted. "You cannot have your dream and eat it. But money is not an obstacle to a happy marriage. I can't accept that."

"It is Fate," I argued, not didactically, I hope. "Men who marry for monetary reasons break a natural law, the law of natural selection. And always they are punished for it; always there arises something to make that marriage unhappy."

Dussosoit lighted a cigarette, a cheap cigarette rolled in brown paper. That is another thing that irritates me to find in a person of his breeding and education.

But Dussosoit is like that—unreasonable. He enjoys cheap cigarettes rolled in brown paper, he says, and that is sufficient for him.

"And yet I came near to being mistaken once," he declared abruptly. "I will tell you, though it will do you no good. You will build another theory. And Life holds no theories. There was Arthur Russel. You remember him? A dreamer and an artist, that is if a

sentimentalist can be an artist. He also held theories, only he made the mistake of putting them into practice. And there was John William Tibbets. You must remember him?"

"A born business man," I put in.

"Exactly. But they were friends, and I was their friend. A queer combination. The sentimental, impracticable, and, I imagine, somewhat lazy Russel, with his brown Van Dyke beard, weak chin, and careful, affected enunciation; John Tibbets, clean-shaven, shrewd, money-mad, and worldly-wise with the wisdom of his class; and myself, who have no viewpoint and no class wisdom. We three used to meet at the club and sometimes we would dine together. And we would talk. For, mark you, there is no talk so good as three persons attacking a point from different and conflicting angles.

"Now you may have noticed that when three men are engaging in general conversation, the discussion within an hour has narrowed to one of two subjects: women or business. We talked about women. And about marriage.

"Tibbets believed in marriage. It helped a man along, he said. But it was a business proposition. A partnership. The main thing was capital. It was foolish to marry a woman without money or the expectation of money when you could gain by marriage what it would require twenty years of shrewd bargaining to make. Romance doesn't pay six per cent; Love seldom splits a dividend.

Russel was not of this opinion. Naturally. He was a poet. Money was infinitesimal compared to Love. It did not detract one iota from Love; it did not add one iota. Love was a divine flame, a celestial spark, that sprang up between man and woman. Money was nothing. The spark was everything.

"But marry for money? It was inconceivable. It was a sin against a God-given passion, a crime against the unalterable nature of things. Such

crimes carry always their own punishment, unhappiness.

"It was the old, old argument, the eternal argument between idealism and practicality. You have heard it ad nauseam. I needn't repeat the changes those two rang in it. I cite their case now because they did more than discuss their ideas—they lived them.

"Russel was the first to marry. He married for love, which was to be expected. He was a sentimentalist. His wife was a frail, slender girl, rather pretty, with a romantic conception of love and no money. Her name was Beatrice and they were to be very happy.

"They took a small house in Bensonhurst where they could have a small garden and he could write poetry for magazines devoted to Ideals and Art.

"Luckily he possessed a few thousands left to him by a deceased aunt who had operated a small business of one sort or another. And then when one has love—!

"At any rate by scrimping and saving and sordid little economies they managed to exist; and they laughed at their discomforts and colored their humdrum life with a delicious romance; and said they were getting the most out of life even if they didn't drive around in upholstered limousines and have a butler and footmen.

"A year later Tibbets was married. He was less precipitate than Russel as he did not believe that marriages were made in Heaven. Finally he found the girl. She had all the attributes for which he had been searching. She was rich, beautiful in a cold, statuesque way, worldly by training, and her social position was buttressed by three generations of wealth. They had a fashionable wedding and went to housekeeping in a huge apartment on the Drive. Distinctly it was a step up for Tibbets; he had garnered the fruit of twenty years of endeavor by the simple expedient of marrying it.

"But there was a string to Fate's offering. The new Mrs. Tibbets was exacting and she was shrewd. She was

chancellor of the exchequer and Tibbets was never permitted to forget it. Not that she mentioned it; she was too well-bred for that. But it was in her attitude; it was a basic fact of their relationship, so obvious and fundamental that it did not require demonstration.

"The Nemesis," I interjected. "The Certain Retribution!"

Dussosoit tossed another piece of beachwood on the fire.

"As you will," he said; "Tibbets paid the price of matrimony. His wife was a soft-pedal virago and she held the cheque-book with a firm grasp. Tibbets was reduced to the rank of camp-follower. In his own home he was about as important as a vice-president.

"The three of us still met at the club occasionally. Russel's soft collar was generally pretty well mussed and his near-tweed suit was innocent of the pressing board. But he was content. That was evident at a glance. He was crazy about his home, enthusiastic concerning the possibilities of his work, and thoroughly satisfied with his place in the cosmos. Tibbets was always immaculate; he had an air of prosperity, the sleek, well-barbered, well-fed appearance of a successful man; he patronized Russel and talked business—always business. He had his clubs, his cars, a country place, a winter home. These were the chief ingredients of life for him. But he was not happy. That I know.

"Tibbets was interested in Russel with the interest a successful man sometimes takes in a failure. He pitied him and at the same time condemned him. Russel was lazy, he would say, no initiative, no push. Look at his wife, same type, both children. You've got to be practical, self-preservation is the first law of nature. Russel should have married a woman of initiative, of energy, who would have made something out of him.

"I shall never forget his disgust at the first week-end he spent at Russel's place. Horrible, he told me, simply disgusting.

"'Would you believe,' he asked, 'that two rational beings could live like they do? Why, that kitchen was covered with dirt, pots and kettles on the floor, a week's washing hanging over the stove, scraps of old meat in the pantry, and believe it or not, a really expensive copy of a Greuze tacked on the kitchen door!'

"'They are the Last of the Romantics,' I said. 'They read Keats instead of washing the dishes and discuss vers libre when they should be cleaning the refrigerator.'

"'We dined on the porch,' continued Tibbets in a hurt voice; 'under what they called a pergola. Russel presided over a scorched roast. He wore a velvet evening-jacket, and every few minutes the dinner would be interrupted while he chased the chickens from under the table!'

"I laughed at him. People are entitled to lead their own lives. And it was only the week before that Russel had confided to me that he would rather die than be buried in a marble mausoleum like Tibbets.

"'Honestly, old man,' he had cried, 'it's no concern of mine, but Tibbets made a horrible blunder when he sold his ideals for a mess of gold—of potage, I mean. Have you seen his place? Horrible, isn't it? Furnished like a hotel lobby. Cold, you know, and oh, unsympathetic—hard. I'd rather live in a bank. And those pictures! And those picture frames! How can people live like that?'

"And there you are. Tibbets, with a wealthy wife, several motor-cars, an established position, and the satisfaction of the successful. And unhappy. Russel, as poor as a church-mouse and as unsuccessful as a charwoman, happy."

"That is my argument," I said, a trifle complacently. "One cannot marry for money and gain any degree of happiness."

Dussosoit rolled another cigarette.

Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he said:

"Perhaps you are right. Today I re-

ceived a gossip letter from the East. Mrs. Tibbets is suing for a divorce. Tibbets left her. Dropped everything. Simply disappeared."

"Nemesis," I pointed out triumphantly. "There is always Nemesis!"

"Perhaps you are right," Dussosoit repeated. "Poor old Tibbets. Life was a hell for him with that woman. I can't blame him."

"And Russel, poor, impractical, is still living his romance," I added. "It

is still glowing, the divine spark that makes up for everything."

"Not exactly," said Dussosoit. "When Tibbets left New York it was not alone. Mrs. Russel was with him. She said she couldn't stand washing any more dishes. It made her hands red."

Dussosoit laughed. I don't like his laugh. And the story was pointless anyway. No moral. Dussosoit's stories never do have a moral.



THE MAIDEN'S PRAYER

By F. T. Parker

THEY were two sweet specimens of girlhood conversing together earnestly and in low tones. I drew a trifle closer, charmed by the modulations of their voices, and eager to learn what thoughts were arising in such innocent minds. Were they pondering on the vagueness of the future, dwelling on its mysteries and promises? I moved nearer, but they spoke so low that I heard little; only two phrases repeated again and again became apparent to me:

"I sez to him," and "He sez to me."



FEW women genuinely want children. What they want is the esteem that goes with the appearance of wanting them.



MEN drink for sociability. Women, that they can imagine themselves in love with their husbands.



TO look is to wonder. To kiss is to find out.

LA PETITE ORPHELINE

QUI CRACHAIT LE SANG

By Florian-Parmentier

VOUS avez vu souvent sortir de l'orphelinat aux grands murs gris, où viennent mourir les rumeurs du dehors, ces jeunes filles accablées et muettes; vous avez vu défiler leur lente théorie sous la porte basse de cette maison où, seul, le tintement grêle de la petite cloche, appelant les vierges aux offices, vient troubler lourd silence des voûtes froides.

Elles s'en vont trois par trois comme une procession, les petites devant, et les grandes ensuite, avec des cols bien blancs et des bonnets de tulle, qui font mieux ressortir la tristesse endeillante de leurs tabliers noirs sur leurs longues robes brunes.

Leurs cheveux sont captifs entre les mailles des résilles, et l'austérité des oraisons a défléuri leurs lèvres pâles. Une discipline prématurée a rendu leurs fronts sévères; et, à dix ans, elles n'osent déjà plus rire aux éclats, ni causer tout haut.

Et pourtant les petites orphelines ne songent point à leur infortune. Elles sont venues au monde tout pénétrées de cette conviction que le bonheur n'est pas fait pour elles. Et, dans les promenades, elles regardent jouer les enfants de leur âge, sans se dire qu'elles aussi avaient droit aux gambades sur le sable des jardins publics, sous l'œil vigilant et attendri d'une bonne mère.

Même, sur les mille choses attirantes qui brillent aux riches façades de la ville ou aux étalages de la foire, elles ne font que jeter, en passant, un regard résigné et sans envie.

A peine les grandes se permettent-elles quelques remarques à la religieuse

qui les accompagne en égrenant son chaplet, cils baissés, et le front pâle caché sous la cornette blanche. . . .

* * *

Vous est-il arrivé quelquefois, en regardant ces mornes enfants passer sur les trottoirs, de vous demander ce qu'il peut y avoir d'histoires émouvantes sous le mystère de leur isolement? . . .

C'était au mois de janvier 1848. Travaillé par la convoitise des libertés enchanteresses et par les vétérans des vieilles émeutes, le peuple s'était insurgé contre le pouvoir. Bientôt, devant l'Hôtel des Affaires Etrangères, ce fut un long appel à la révolte et à la haine, un bruit de furieuses rafales, un remous écumant de mer démontée.

Un coup de feu, parti du sein des rebelles, fut le signal de l'égorgement.

Hélas! latrop vive riposte de la troupe balaya, avec les acteurs de la révolution, une cinquantaine de passants inoffensifs.

L'un d'eux fut relevé ensanglanté et presque expirant, par des amis qui le ramenèrent chez lui.

Mais, horreur! dans la maison tout était saccagé. Et la femme du malheureux gisait à terre, un poignard planté dans la gorge. Et son sang étalait sous elle comme un manteau de pourpre sombre. Et leur petite fille s'agitait dans son berceau, en poussant des cris étranglés.

Alors, l'un des hommes, s'étant approché, put voir que quelqu'un, en guise de lait, avait mis du sang dans le biberon de l'enfant.

Au bout d'une demi-heure de soins

énergiques, le blessé ouvrit les yeux, les promena avec une expression d'indicible terreur sur le désordre de cette scène barbare, puis il les referma et s'éteignit dans un spasme.

* * *

Quelques années plus tard, peut-être eussiez-vous remarqué, parmi les pensionnaires laides et mélancholiques d'un orphelinat de province, une petite fille d'une beauté énigmatique, dont les grands yeux noirs éclairaient un visage

très pâle, d'une blancheur de nappe d'autel.

Ses mains diaphanes ressemblaient à de merveilleux objets d'albâtre auxquels un miracle eût donné la vie.

Un effroi vacillait sans cesse dans son regard, qui paraissait s'étendre au delà des choses.

Et souvent sa gorge était secouée par une toux mauvaise, et sa salive alors s'ourlait de filaments rouges.

C'était notre pauvre petite orpheline qui recrachait le sang de sa mère.



CHANSON GRECQUE

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

If in our hand there lingers
Dust of a Pæstum rose,
And on our lips a little trace
Of chypre or of nard,

Time cannot force our fingers,
And not a wind that blows
Can thief us of the gift we dead
Have learned so well to guard!

So go your way, anointed
Of all the lords of earth!
You cannot take away from us one
grain
Of what our fingers fold!

And on a day appointed
Beggars will know the worth
Of dust of laurel leaf and rose,
That is more dear than gold!



WHEN a woman reads a book, the word Love is always printed in capitals.

XYLOPHONE SOLOS

By George Jean Nathan

I

THE modern Broadway crook play, commonly held to be as typical and characteristic an American product as a Muhlenberg College bachelor of arts or the Mann Act, is actually no more indigenously American than Nápravnik's "Dubroffsky." The modern Broadway crook play is a lineal descendant of the German-Austro-Hungarian crook play: its blood relationship is more or less visible in its every feature. The American Carters and Marcins with their "Master Minds" and "Cheating Cheaters" were in each instance anticipated by the Austro-Hungarian Sawa Zez-Mirskis with their "Super-Scoundrels" (*Der Obergauener*) and "Cheated Cheaters" (*Betrogene Betrüger*), as the American Armstrongs and McHughs with their card-sharper "Greyhounds" and burlesque "Officers 666" were in each instance anticipated by the Central European Karl Schülers with their "Card Sharppers" (*Falschspieler*) and Turzinsky-Stifters with their burlesque "Don't Write Letters" (*Mann Soll Keine Briefe Schreiben*). The Broadway crook melodrama composer like Willard Mack has always had a crook melodrama papa overseas like Kurt Matull; the Broadway crook farce composer like James Montgomery a crook farce papa like Ferenz Molnar. The Americans have in none of these cases been plagiarists—this is not the point—but the species of crook plays which they have written were in each case already familiar to and popular with the Central European audience.

Not only in America but in Europe

is the crook play, when it is done with a reasonable show of skill, among the most prosperous and lucrative of the numerous theatrical yap-traps. The theory of the local college critics that the high popularity of the crook drama in America is a melancholy mark of the inferior American theatrical taste is a theory that gets a swift bump in the nose when the Continental (and particularly the French) statistics are plumbed.

II

PROBABLY no other institution on earth is burdened with so many positive theories and rules of conduct as the theater. And in probably no other institution, save it be a physical culture diet restaurant, are the positive theories and rules of conduct so profitably to be violated. The moment an oracular theory or law is laid down in the theater, that moment does it become certain that by breaking it someone is due shortly to make at least a quarter of a million dollars.

A. H. Woods, probably the shrewdest commercial manager in the American theater, rejected a ridiculously cheap advance offer of a sixty per cent interest in the melodrama named "The Unknown Purple" on the contention that the play contained a situation in which a wife failed to recognize her husband after an absence of eight or ten years, which situation, Mr. Woods informed the author of the play, would never conceivably be accepted as credible by a theater audience. "The Unknown Purple," with the situation, thereupon proceeded to run for an entire theatrical year in New York City alone.

When Arthur Hopkins announced that he was about to produce "The Jest," this same canny Mons. Woods voiced his conviction that so sombre a tragedy could not conceivably draw more than a very limited "highbrow" audience, as he termed it, and could not consequently play to "big money." The sombre "Jest" thereupon promptly turned out to be the greatest financial dramatic success in many years, playing to the astonishingly high box-office sale of over nineteen thousand dollars a week.

George M. Cohan, who probably knows more about popular playmaking than all the rest of the popular American playwrights combined, has said in answer to an interviewer's query: "If you want to sell anything to Americans, sell them what they want. That goes for pants or plays. And give them what they want quick! Shoot it over fast! Tell your story so sharply that it will keep your audience awake all the time following you! Get a plot and get it going at once! Don't give the audience time to think!" Mr. Cohan rejected the manuscript of "Peg o' My Heart" on the ground that it moved too deliberately, that its story was not shot over with sufficient punch and speed, that its plot maneuvering was so slow that an audience would have too much time to think about it and that, therefore, it would fail to hold an American audience. "Peg o' My Heart" thereupon began a record-breaking run that is still going on in the remote tank towns and that has netted its author and manager a great fortune.

Augustus Thomas, the leading American apostle and professor of absolutism in dramatic technique—in the theory that in order to succeed a drama must be written according to hard and fast, tested and inviolable, formulæ—laboriously confected "The Copperhead" according to the said formulæ and then found, upon the third night of its successful New York presentation, that it was necessary to the perpetuation of the play's success to turn the chief principle of his main formula topsy-turvy. Thus,

the first night enigma of Milt Shanks' loyalty to the Federal government was on the third night imparted to the audience in a hoarse down-stage whisper by the rewritten Milt himself.

Daniel Arthur hesitated to produce Clare Kummer's "Good Gracious Annabelle" as a music show libretto because it was, he maintained, too absurd a fable too artificially handled. Hopkins thereupon obtained the rights to the libretto from Mons. Arthur, impudently produced the libretto as a straight farce comedy without any music at all, and got away with it.

These are five cases out of an available five hundred.

The moral is: Don't bathe too soon after eating.

III

RE-READING the bulky *opera* of the late William Winter, I am impressed more than ever with the utter incompetence of the man as a critic of the drama. A writer of many a felicitous phrase and fruity turn of sentence, he was yet of the mind of a schoolboy, of the point of view of a girl disappointed in love. Of his grotesque morality and puritanism in matters of art, I do not speak: these are of course familiar. What I speak of was the man's almost complete lack of understanding of the fundamental requirements of criticism. He was a critic of acting and drama in precisely the same sense that the late William S. Devery was a critic of sociology. His attitude was generally the attitude of a Simon Legree without slaves. Perpetually vexed, irritated, infuriated, he would wildly brandish his cowhide about him, would have at imaginary ghosts that were constantly terrorizing him and, finding the ghosts made of thin air, would suffer upon his own ear the boomerang sting of the whip. Dancing then and howling over the self-inflicted fetch, he would seek to get even with the whip by loudly calling it a rattlesnake. And it was this imprecation that was duly set upon paper and called criticism.

If I seem to be indelicate in writing thus of a dead man, I have no shuffling apologies to make. The fact that Winter is dead doesn't increase my respect for him in the slightest. And though I hope that the good Lord God may rest the soul of him in eternal peace, I can't resist the conviction—come upon me since carefully re-reading his works—that the mark of the man as a critic of the theater was best to be appraised in his acceptance of public benefit alms, in the dour midnight of his life, from the very actors whom he had labelled dramatic *maquereaux* and the very actresses whom his pale blue New England mind had denounced as no better than harlots. It is to the credit of Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske that she alone—of all who were sought to play the hypocrite to such a man in his doddering, financially wrecked days—remained a sufficiently acute critic of critics to show the committee the door.

IV

THE disappointingly small measure of popular success achieved by the woman who is agreed to be the best actress on the native stage, a regular topic for speculation where critics of the theater are gathered together, is not so difficult of explanation as it would seem to be. The woman in question, an unusually able player and one further endowed with a musical speaking voice and more than the average share of comeliness, is yet utterly devoid of the sex appeal essential to success on the popular dramatic stage. This observation would, in faith, be trite enough were it not for the fact that the deficiency (doubtless thoroughly recognized by the excellent actress herself) has never to my knowledge been attributed to her even by her least friendly critics. And yet, pin down her admirers and disfavoureds one by one, riddle their elaborately profound professorisms, and one finds that in the subconscious nook of each there hides, politely veiled in academic flim-flam, this simple icicle truth.

The actress who thus, albeit indirectly, impresses an audience, though she be the greatest actress in her nation, will ever remain a popular failure. The yokel sees never the role interpreted by the actress, but the actress interpreted by the woman. It is nonsense to say, as they do say, that this or that stage young woman is New York's or Cleveland's or Kansas City's favourite actress. It is more accurate to say that the young woman, whoever she happens to be, is New York's or Cleveland's or Kansas City's favourite stage young woman. When the Senior Class at Yale or Harvard thinks it is voting for its favourite actress, it is actually voting for the girl it would individually like best to take out to supper. Allen and Ginter did not sell cigarettes by putting in their packets pictures of actresses as actresses—imagine the yokels collecting photographs of Mrs. Sarah Cowell Lemoyne as the Dowager Duchess de Coutras!—but by putting in pictures of actresses as women with good shapes and as girls with naughty dimples and soulful eyes. To believe that the yokel cuts out half-tones of an actress and pastes them on the wall over his bed because he venerates the actress for her histrionic virtuosity is to believe that the editor scholastically puts them in his magazine for the same reason.

V

WHAT Sacha Guitry's "L'Illusioniste" will be like when it reaches the American platform under the presently announced title of "The Great Illusion," I do not know. But there is probably no other play written in France in the last half-dozen years that, in the original, catches so deftly and humorously what we in this country call the boulevard tone. The long rose-coloured monologue toward the close of the middle act wherewith the prestidigitator gradually batters down the feminine hesitations of his most recent *penchant*, together with the long morning-after antithetical monologue where-

with he seeks gracefully to effect his getaway, comprise a brace of situations as shrewdly observant and as comical as one will discover in many years of Continental playgoing. There is a touch of Schnitzler in the philosophy of these scenes, if not in the execution. It will be a pity if they are not presented to American audiences very largely in literal translation, for to "adapt" them will be almost utterly to ruin them. But, either way, what an actor it will require to read them!

VI

THE most ignorant journalistic criticism visited upon a play in my memory was that accorded Zoë Akins' "Papa" on its New York presentation. Con-founded by something not duly listed in the pigeon-holes, the gentlemen of the press promptly concluded that the author had failed in her attempt to write a kind of play that was listed in the pigeon-holes when, of course, what the author had tried plainly to do was to write a kind of play that was not listed in the pigeon-holes. Whether she failed to do this in sound fashion, or whether she succeeded, is beside the point. The point is that she was criticized not for what she tried to do—whether, as I say, the accomplishment was good or bad—but for what she deliberately tried not to do. To take to the criticism of a play like "Papa" a "Turn to the Right" mind and a "Three Faces East" technical appraisal is to shop at a florist's for beefsteak. It is much as if one were indignantly to criticize Culmbacher for its lack of palliative massage properties or a horse liniment for its taste.

VII

I TRUST that I am not unduly pessimistic, yet it seems to me that each year the quality of acting in the American theater grows progressively worse. Save in the instance of a half-dozen or so men and a half-dozen or so women, the bulk of acting becomes each season

more slovenly, more uncouth, more absurdly incompetent. That the actors themselves are wholly to blame for this, I doubt. The average actor, true enough, brings to his profession not one-half the equipment that a fairly good barber brings to his; and the average actress is ready to call it quits when she has learned how to pronounce three or four French words and to sit down without automatically throwing her right leg over her left. But despite this it seems to me that, though the job were akin to driving nails into cobblestones, these droll curios might yet be polished up a bit and improved if there existed producers who knew how to do the polishing and the improving. That the average actor is willing to be helped, I haven't the slightest doubt. But that the average producer knows how to help him, I doubt seriously.

The producer makes the mistake of believing his job done when he hires the actor. His job, in reality, has then just begun. When the producer becomes indignant over the incompetence of the actor he has hired, he becomes foolish. He has not hired competence, though he is ever fond of deluding himself with the tradition and hope that he has; he has hired merely a large hunk of more or less sensitive and impressionable wax. To expect this clod to perform its work of its own accord is to expect a phonograph to play without a needle, a record and considerable winding. If the acting on the American stage grows worse year by year, it is because the producers have taken more and more for granted the theory that the average actor knows something about his work. The average actor knows no more about his work than the average reader on the staff of a magazine knows about his work. He knows that he mustn't stop to blow his nose in the middle of a hot love scene, that he must refrain from spitting on Aubrey Tanqueray's rug and that he must look up the pronunciation of the word "coniomycetus"—just as the magazine reader knows that he mustn't bother the editor with stories about the beautiful,

seductive, mysterious Fifi Pommard, alias Sophie Bohnensalat, the German spy—but, like the reader, he knows blamed little else. Of imagination, initiative, critical analysis, artistic derring-do, neither vouchsafes a trace.

If an actor gives a bad performance the fault is the producing director's, just as if a trained seal gives a bad performance the fault is the trainer's. The director who, upon finding an actor, perfunctorily takes for granted the actor's ability to do the right thing at the right moment is akin to the trainer who, upon finding a seal, perfunctorily takes for granted the seal's ability to intertwine the French and American flags at the right moment. The actor is not an independent body and mind, a creature of invention and resolve: he is a mere mechanical instrument. He is the keyboard upon which the producer plays the playwright's tunes. He is to creative art what the nickelodeon is to De Pachmann. The producer who confidently regards him otherwise is like the street urchin who fondly hopes to start the slot piano going merely by shaking it.

VIII

It is a common dudgeon of the American professor-critics of the drama that the low grade of American theatrical entertainment is due to the low taste of the American middle-class theatrical audience. Elevate the taste of this middle-class, rid the auditorium of the artistic and æsthetic predilections of our stockbrokers, haberdashers, clothing salesmen, moving-picture actors and other such mental and social octoroons, and—they say—you will coincidentally and simultaneously elevate the quality of American drama.

Let us suppose that this middle-class and its plebeian taste were completely and summarily removed from the American theater and its erstwhile loges occupied by, let us say, the aristocrats of Europe and the aristocratic taste of Europe—in direct example, let us further say, the aristocratic taste of Great Britain. What would be the result?

Surveying the statistics of royalty's attendance upon the London theater during the last twelve years, we find that what this aristocratic and cultivated taste chiefly patronized and relished was as follows:

Feb. 12, 1907—His Majesty the King, accompanied by the Queen, visited the Apollo and saw "The Stronger Sex," a third-rate popular comedy by John Valentine.

Feb. 19, 1907—The Royal couple went to Wyndham's and saw "When Knights Were Bold," a fourth-rate flash-back romantic play the success of which was due to the low comedy, slapstick antick-ing of the actor James Welch in the role of Sir Guy de Vere.

June 26, 1907—They visited the Adelphi to see the ancient tub-pounder, "The Corsican Brothers."

July 18, 1907—They went to the Vaudeville to see the adapted French farce, "Mrs. Ponderbury's Past."

The King, while in Paris the same year without the Queen, attended "Vous N'Avez Rien à Déclarer" and "La Puce à l'Oreille," two particularly hot ones, both at the Nouveautés, and Bernstein's "The Thief." While the King was away, the Queen took in Hall Caine's "The Bondman," "Raffles," "Miss Hook of Holland," the variety show at the Palace, "The Great Conspiracy," "The Belle of Mayfair"—and went a second time to see both "The Stronger Sex" and James Welch's monkeyshines.

The Prince and Princess of Wales during this season took in "The Stronger Sex" and "Sinbad the Sailor," a Drury Lane extravaganza.

In 1908, I find that the aristocratic taste went in for "A White Man" (called "The Squaw Man" in this country); "Diana of Dobson's," the Cicely Hamilton shopgirl romance; the naughty farce "Dear Old Charlie"; the patriotic military flagwagger hight "The Flag Lieutenant"; "Marriages of Mayfair," a Cecil Raleigh-Henry Hamilton Drury Lane melodrama; "Lady Barbarity," an R. C. Carton masterpiece; "Her Father" (twice), a prototype of

the Broadway play called "The Rainbow"; "The Gay Gordons," "The Belle of Brittany," "The King of Cadonia," "Havana" and similar song and dance shows; the venerable "Lyons Mail"; "The Sway Boat," by W. T. Coleby, and "The Early Worm," a laborious farce by Frederick Lonsdale. The command performances in this year were "The Flag Lieutenant," "The Corsican Brothers," "The Duke's Motto" and Alfred Sutro's "Builder of Bridges."

The following year saw the King twice taking in the Drury Lane melodrama called "The Whip." The King also went to see "An Englishman's Home," a yellow journal melopiece; "Arsène Lupin," a detective play; "The Woman in the Case," a Clyde Fitch melodrama attributed to Theodore Kremer; a third-rate farce named "Mr. Preedy and the Countess," subsequently done at the Maxine Elliott Theater in this country; a couple of obscure "society plays" by obscure writers; and a couple of leg shows in which the pretty Phyllis Dare was appearing. The taste of the King was concurred in by the Prince and Princess of Wales and, save in the case of a vaudeville show at the Alhambra, by the Queen. "The Lyons Mail" was one of the command performances.

In 1910, the King elected Isabel Jay and "The Balkan Princess," Lily Elsie and "The Dollar Princess," Gertie Millar and "Our Miss Gibbs," together with "Alias Jimmy Valentine," "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The House of Temperley," "Tantalizing Tommy" and a Chauncey Olcott opus called "The O'Flynn." The next four years found Royalty attending in the main Bulwer Lytton's "Money" (a command performance in honour of the visit of the German Emperor and the German Empress!), the Robert Hichens Valeska Suratt *conte* "Bella Donna," the Horace Annesley Vachell potboiler "Jelf's," the coloured moving pictures at the Scala, Charles Klein's "Third Degree" at the Garrick, James Montgomery's Broadway crook farce "Ready Money," the suggestive French farce "The Glad

Eye" (here called "The Zebra" in the Paul Potter adaptation), Cicely Courtneidge in the "Princess Caprice" music show, the song and dance shows called "The Girl in the Taxi" and "The Dancing Mistress," the movie "Quo Vadis," a variety show, a revival of "The Silver King," the Drury Lane extravaganza "Sleeping Beauty," the Third Avenue plumber's delight "Mr. Wu," the girl shows called "The Cinema Star" and "The Marriage Market," a vaudeville bill at the Palace, and "Grumpy" at the New Theater.

The war year of 1915 saw Queen Alexandra, Princess Victoria and Princess Maude of Fife forgetting their troubles at a musical comedy named "Betty" and the Queen and Princess Mary taking in "Potash and Perlmutter" and the vaudeville show at the Coliseum—the King remaining away from the theater save on the occasion of war benefit performances. In the subsequent war year of 1916, the Prince of Wales, accompanied by Prince Albert, went to the Palace to lay an eye to the cuties in "The Passing Show"; the Queen, accompanied by the Grand Duchess George of Russia, took in "Puss in Boots" at Drury Lane; the same ladies, joined by the Princess Victoria, the following week (Jan. 18) went to a vaudeville show; the same ladies—the King still remaining away from the theater—on May 29 took in "Peg o' My Heart"; and the Queen, on July 10, sat alone through a something called "The Bing Boys Are Here." And the seasons of 1917-1919 saw the movie called "Intolerance," Al Woods' "Friendly Enemies," a couple of vaudeville shows, Edward Sheldon's "Romance" and a revival of Sydney Grundy's "Pair of Spectacles" the especial marks of the aristocratic favour.

During these dozen years, while the aristocratic eye was popping at the hack comedies of Carton, the blood and thunder melodramas of Drury Lane, the red-vest vaudeville acts at the Alhambra and the shapely legs of the Adelphi chorus girls, there were being presented just around the corner—and passed up

—the great plays of the great dramatic writers of all time, ancient and modern. In 1907, with Hauptmann's "Sunken Bell" at the Waldorf, His Majesty went instead to Somerset Maugham's "Lady Frederick" at the Court. In 1908, with D'Annunzio's "La Figlia di Jorio" at the Shaftsbury, Her Majesty elected instead a musical comedy by Adrian Ross and Leslie Stuart in which Laurence Grossmith was springing comical jokes. In 1909, with Calderon at the Aldwych and Oliver Goldsmith at the Haymarket, the Prince and Princess of Wales voted for Gladys Cooper's rendition of a Blanche Ring song in a Gaiety show and for a vaudeville bill at the Empire. In 1910, with Shakespeare at the Court and Shaw at the Duke of York's, the royal family made instead for a Paul Armstrong melodrama at the Comedy and a look at Emmy Whelen at Daly's. With Synge, Schnitzler, Galsworthy, Hervieu playing down the block, Buckingham Palace has ever generally selected instead a bedroom farce, a crook melodrama or a leg show.

Let us therefore under the circumstances invite our American professors to make dramatic criticism somewhat safer for democracy.

IX

AMONG the mid-summer exhibits as I write are "The Five Million," a comedy by the Messrs. Guy Bolton and Frank Mandel; "At 9:45," a melodrama by Mr. Owen Davis; "The Gaieties of 1919," a music show vouchsafed by the Messrs. Shubert; and "Open Your Eyes," a propaganda motion picture. The first named masterpiece is one of the become conventional dodges wherein a stage fable of the Edward E. Kidder and Alice Ives-Jerome Eddy vintage is palmed off as up-to-the-minute by dressing the hero in khaki and substituting an American flag over the sideboard for the erstwhile chromo

of Uncle Rufus. The evening is a continuous explosion of patriotic hokums interrupted but faintly with such wistful meditations as "Yes, love is a funny thing" and "You've done me a greater injury than taking my life; you've taken away my faith." The second trump is the stereotyped murder-mystery play in which the great detective's quest for the murderer is periodically interrupted by comedy relief from an Irish servant girl. The first ten minutes of the piece are effective "theater," but the affair thereafter promptly descends to well-worn rubber-stamps.

"The Gaieties of 1919" is handsomely mounted, contains in the person of a houri named Gray an extraordinary exponent of the chemise dance, exploits the humorous Mr. Ed. Wynn, and presents to the eye a seemly virgin hight Ballew. Like "The Follies," the exhibition is, however, empty of wit. What a place there is in America for a revuiste like Rip! The cinema called "Open Your Eyes," attended jointly—in order to get out of a heavy rainstorm—by Mencken and myself, is designed to expound to the young of the land the sour consequences attendant upon an emulation of the divertissements of the rabbitry. The names of various horrible pollutions that result—to judge by the pictures thrown on the screen—from holding hands on sofas, are flashed forth every two or three minutes in large capitals. And views of *recherché* society women rushing out to front stoops to greet their guests alternate with hortatory warnings against muco-purulent inflammations and the lewder bacilli and micrococci. So much for the first fifteen minutes. After that, Mencken decided that if it rested between getting the disease or seeing the balance of the picture, he'd take a chance on the disease.



ARNOLD BENNETT

By H. L. Mencken

I

DISCOURSING in this place a while back upon the utter collapse of H. G. Wells, I called attention to the fact that the tragedy of it was made doubly sour by the unperturbed survival and even steady growth of his old rival and *Corpsbruder*, Arnold Bennett. After I had put that upon paper and it had been embalmed in type I began to grow a bit doubtful about it. Was the fact, after all, a fact—that is, regarding Bennett? Was he actually holding up? . . . The doubt gnawed me for a few days and nights, and then set me to a reluctant, half-fearful re-examination of the Bennett novels, beginning with "Clayhanger." From "Clayhanger," becoming interested, I proceeded to "The Old Wives' Tale," and from "The Old Wives' Tale" to "Whom God Hath Joined." And then, a growing certainty reassuring me, I re-read, wholly or in part, a half dozen others, and then some of the plays, and then "Paris Nights." I have now emerged from that prudent (and increasingly agreeable labor), and all my old hesitation is gone. I stake my neck upon it that Bennett has *not* gone back. And if I had two necks I'd stake the other upon it that, as he stands and as Wells stands, he is as far above Wells as the Alps are above the Piedmont Plain.

II

THE two, indeed, are now almost at opposite poles—that is, in everything interior and important, in everything having to do with attitudes and ideas, in everything beyond the mere craft of ar-

ranging words in ingratiating sequences. As stylists, of course, they still have many points of contact. Each writes a journalese that is extraordinarily loose, tuneful and chromatic; each occasionally rises to genuine originality of phrase; each is apt to be carried away, when he gets up full steam, by the mere rush and hullabaloo of his own smartness. But in matter they are intrinsically unlike, and even antagonistic. Wells has a believing mind, and cannot resist the lascivious beckonings and eye-winkings of meretricious novelty; Bennett carries skepticism so far that it often takes on the appearance of a mere peasant-like suspicion of ideas, bellicose and unintelligent. Wells is astonishingly intimate and confidential, and more than one of his novels reeks with a shameless sort of autobiography; Bennett, even when he makes use of personal experience, contrives to get impersonality into it. Wells, finally, is a sentimentalist, and cannot conceal his feelings; Bennett, of all the English novelists of the day, is the most steadily aloof and ironical.

This habit of irony, in truth, is the thing that gives Bennett all his characteristic color, and is at the bottom of both his peculiar merit and his peculiar limitation. On the one hand it sets him free from the besetting sin of the contemporary novelist: he never preaches, he has no messianic delusion, he is above the puerile theories that have engulfed such romantic men as Wells, Winston Churchill and the late Jack London, and even at times such sentimental agnostics as Dreiser. But on the other hand it leaves him empty of the passion that is, when all is said and

done, the chief mark of the true novelist. The trouble with him is that he cannot feel with his characters, that he never involves himself emotionally in their struggles against destiny, that the drama of their lives never thrills or dismays him—and the result is that he is unable to arouse in the reader that penetrating sense of kinship, that profound and instinctive sympathy, which in its net effect is almost indistinguishable from the understanding born of experiences actually endured and emotions actually shared. Joseph Conrad, in a memorable piece of criticism, once put the thing clearly. "My task," he said, "is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, above all, to make you *see*." Here seeing, it must be obvious, is no more than feeling put into physical terms; it is not the outward aspect that is to be seen, but the inner truth—and the end to be sought by that comprehension of inner truth is responsive recognition, the sympathy of poor mortal for poor mortal, the tidal uprush of feeling that makes us all one. Bennett, it seems to me, cannot evoke it. His characters, as they pass, have a deceptive brilliance of outline, but they soon fade; one never finds them haunting the memory as Lord Jim haunts it, or Carrie Meeber, or Huck Finn, or Tom Jones. The reason is not far to seek. It lies in the plain fact that they appear to their creator, not as men and women whose hopes and agonies are of poignant concern, not as tragic comedians in isolated and concentrated dramas, but as mean figures in an infinitely dispersed and unintelligible farce, as helpless nobodies in an epic struggle that transcends both their volition and their comprehension. So viewing them, he fails to humanize them completely, and so he fails to make their emotions contagious. They are, in their way, often vividly real; they are thoroughly accounted for; what there is of them is unflinchingly life-like; they move and breathe in an environment that pulses and glows. But the attitude of the author toward them remains, in the end,

the attitude of a biologist toward his laboratory animals. He does not *feel* with them—and neither does his reader.

Bennett's chief business, in fact, is not with individuals at all, even though he occasionally brings them up almost to life-size. What concerns him principally is the common life of large groups, the action and reaction of castes and classes, the struggle among societies. In particular, he is engrossed by the colossal and disorderly functioning of the English middle classes—a division of mankind inordinately mixed in race, confused in ideals and illogical in ideas. It is a group that has had interpreters aplenty, past and present; a full half of the literature of the Victorian era was devoted to it. But never, I believe, has it had an interpreter more resolutely detached and relentless—never has it had one less shaken by emotional involvement. Here the very lack that detracts so much from Bennett's stature as a novelist in the conventional sense is converted into a valuable possession. Better than any other man of his time he has got upon paper the social anatomy and physiology of the masses of average, everyday, unimaginative Englishmen. One leaves the long series of Five Towns books with a sense of having looked down the tube of a microscope upon a huge swarm of infinitely little but incessantly struggling organisms—creatures engaged furiously in the pursuit of grotesque and unintelligible ends—helpless participants in and victims of a struggle that takes on, to their eyes, a thousand lofty purposes, all of them puerile to the observer above its turmoil. Here, he seems to say, is the middle, the average, the typical Englishman. Here is the fellow as he appears to himself—virtuous, laborious, important, intelligent, made in God's image. And here he is in fact—swinish, ineffective, inconsequential, stupid, a feeble parody upon his maker. It is irony that penetrates and devastates, and it is unrelieved by any show of the pity that gets into the irony of Conrad, or of the tolerant claim of kinship that mitigates that of Fielding and

Thackeray. It is harsh and cocksure. It has, at its moments, some flavor of actual boulderism: one instinctively shrinks from so smart-alecky a pulling off of underclothes and unveiling of warts.

It is easy to discern in it, indeed, a note of distinct hostility, and even of disgust. The long exile of the author is not without its significance. He not only got in France something of the Frenchman's aloof and disdainful view of the English; he must have taken a certain distaste for the national scene with him in the first place, else he would not have gone at all. The same attitude shows itself in W. L. George, another Englishman smeared with Gallic foreignness. Both men, it will be recalled, reacted to the tremendous emotional assault of the war, not by yielding to it ecstatically in the manner of the unpolluted islanders, but by shrinking from it into a reserve that was naturally misunderstood. George has put his sniffs into "Blind Alley"; Bennett has got his into "The Pretty Lady." I do not say that either book is positively French; what I do say is that both mirror an attitude that has been somehow emptied of mere nationalism. An Italian adventure, I daresay, would have produced the same effect, or a Spanish, or Russian, or German. But it happened to be French. What the Bennett story attempts to do is what every serious Bennett story attempts to do: to exhibit dramatically the great gap separating the substance from the appearance in the English character. It seems to me that its prudent and self-centered G. J. Hoape is a vastly more real Englishman of his class, and, what is more, an Englishman vastly more useful and creditable to England, than any of the gaudy Bayards and Cids of conventional war fiction. Here, indeed, the irony somehow fails. The man we are obviously expected to disdain converts himself, toward the end, into a man not without his touches of the admirable. He is no hero, God knows, and there is no more brilliance in him than you will find in an average country squire or

Parliament man, but he has the rare virtue of common sense, and that is probably the virtue that has served the English better than all others. Curiously enough, the English reading public recognized the irony, but failed to observe its confutation, and so the book got Bennett into bad odor at home, and into worse odor among the sedulous apes of English ideas and emotions on this side of the water. But it is a sound work nevertheless—a sound work with a large and unescapable defect.

III

THAT defect is visible in a good many of the other things that Bennett has done. It is the product of his emotional detachment and it commonly reveals itself as an inability to take his own story seriously. Sometimes, he pokes open fun at it, as in "The Roll-Call"; more often he simply abandons it before it is done, as if weary of a too tedious foolery. This last process is plainly visible in "The Pretty Lady." The thing that gives form and direction to that story is a simple enough problem in psychology, to wit: what will happen when a man of sound education and decent instincts, of sober age and prudent habit, of common sense and even of a certain mild cleverness—what will happen, logically and naturally, when such a normal, respectable, cautious fellow finds himself disquietingly in love with a lady of no position at all—in brief, with a lady but lately of the town? Bennett sets the problem, and for a couple of hundred pages investigates it with the utmost ingenuity and address, exposing and discussing its sub-problems, tracing the gradual shifting of its terms, prodding with sharp insight into the psychological material entering into it. And then, as if suddenly tired of it—worse, as if suddenly convinced that the thing has gone on long enough, that he has given the public enough of a book for its money—he forthwith evades the solution altogether, and brings down his curtain upon a palpably artificial dénouement. The

device murders the book. One is arrested at the start by a fascinating statement of the problem, one follows a discussion of it that shows Bennett at his brilliant best, fertile in detail, alert to every twist of motive, incisively ironical at every step—and then, at the end, one is incontinently turned out of the booth. The effect is that of being assaulted with an ice-pick by a hitherto amiable bartender, almost that of being bitten by a pretty girl in the midst of an amicable buss.

That effect, unluckily, is no stranger to the reader of the Bennett novels. One encounters it in many of them. There is a tremendous marshalling of meticulous and illuminating observation, the background throbs with color, the sardonic humor is never failing, it is a capital show—but always one goes away from it with a sense of having missed the conclusion, always there is a final begging of the question. It is not hard to perceive the attitude of mind underlying this chronic evasion of issues. It is, in essence, agnosticism carried to the last place of decimals. Life itself is meaningless; therefore the discussion of life is meaningless; therefore, why try futilely to get a meaning into it? The reasoning, unluckily, has holes in it. It may be sound logically, but it is psychologically unworkable. One goes to novels, not for the bald scientific fact, but for a romantic amelioration of it. When they carry that amelioration to the point of uncritical certainty, when they are full of "ideas" that click and whirl like machines, then the mind revolts against the childish naïveté of the thing. But when there is no organization of the spectacle at all, when it is presented as a mere formless panorama, when to the sense of its unintelligibility is added the suggestion of its inherent chaos, then the mind revolts no less. Art can never be simple representation. It cannot deal solely with precisely what is. It must, at the least, present the real in the light of some recognizable ideal; it must give to the eternal farce, if not some moral, then at all events some direction. For without

that formulation there can be no clear-cut separation of the individual will from the general stew and turmoil of things, and without that separation there can be no coherent drama, and without that drama there can be no evocation of emotion, and without that emotion art is unimaginable. The field of the novel is very wide. There is room, on the one side, for a brilliant play of ideas and theories, provided only they do not stiffen the struggle of man with man, or of man with destiny, into a mere struggle of abstractions. There is room, on the other side, for the most complete agnosticism, provided only it be tempered by feeling. Joseph Conrad is quite as unshakable an agnostic as Bennett; he is a ten times more implacable ironist. But there is yet a place in his scheme for a sardonic sort of pity, and pity, however sardonic, is perhaps as good an emotion as another. The trouble with Bennett is that he essays to sneer, not only at the futile aspiration of man, but also at the agony that goes with it. The result is an air of affectation, of superficiality, almost of stupidity. The manner, on the one hand, is that of a highly skillful and profoundly original artist, but on the other hand it is that of a sophomore just made aware of Haeckel, Bradlaugh and Nietzsche.

Bennett's unmitigated skepticism explains two things that have constantly puzzled the reviewers, and that have been the cause of a great deal of idiotic writing about him—for him as well as against him. One of these things is his utter lack of anything properly describable as artistic conscience—his extreme readiness to play the star hour in the seraglio of the publishers; the other is his habit of translating platitudes into racy journalese and gravely offering them to the suburban trade as "pocket philosophies." Both crimes, it seems to me, have their rise in his congenital incapacity for taking ideas seriously, even including his own. "If this," he appears to say, "is the tosh you want, then here is another dose of it. Personally, I have little interest in

that sort of thing. Even good novels—the best I can do—are no more than compromises with a silly convention. I am not interested in stories; I am interested in the anatomy of human melancholy; I am a descriptive sociologist, with overtones of malice. But if you want stories, and can pay for them, I am willing to give them to you. And if you prefer bad stories, then here is a bad one. Don't assume you can shame me by deploring my willingness. Think of what your doctors do every day, and your lawyers, and your men of God, and your stockbrokers, and your traders and politicians. I am surely no worse than the average. In fact, I am probably a good deal superior to the average, for I am at least not deceived by my own mountebankery—I at least know my sound goods from my shoddy." Such, I daresay, is the process of thought behind such hollow trade-goods as "Buried Alive" and "The Lion's Share." One does not need the man's own amazing confidences to hear his snickers at his audience, at his work and at himself.

The books of boiled-mutton "philosophy" in the manner of Dr. Orison Swett Marden and Dr. Frank Crane and the occasional pot-boilers for the newspapers and magazines probably have much the same origin. What appears in them is not a weakness for ideas that are stale and obvious, but a distrust of all ideas whatsoever. The public, with its mob yearning to be instructed, edified and pulled by the nose, demands certainties; it must be told definitely and a bit raucously that this is true and that is false. But there *are* no certainties. *Ergo*, one notion is as good as another, and if it happens to be utter flubdub, so much the better—for it is precisely flubdub that penetrates the popular skull with the greatest facility. The way is already made: the hole already gapes. An effort to approach the hidden and baffling truth would simply burden the enterprise with difficulty. Moreover, the effort is intrinsically laborious and ungrateful. Moreover, there is probably no hidden

truth to be uncovered. Thus, by the route of skepticism, Bennett apparently arrives at his soothsaying. That he actually believes in his own preaching is inconceivable. He is far too intelligent a man to hold that any truths within the comprehension of the popular audience are sound enough to be worth preaching, or that it would do any good to preach them if they were. No doubt he is considerably amused *in petto* by the gravity with which his bedizened platitudes have been received by persons accustomed to that sort of fare, particularly in America. It would be interesting to hear his private view of the corn-fed critics who hymn him as a profound and impassioned moralist, with a mission to rescue the plain people from the heresies of such fellows as Dreiser.

IV

SO MUCH for two of the salient symptoms of his underlying skepticism. Another is to be found in his incapacity to be, in the ordinary sense, ingratiating; it is simply beyond him to say the pleasant thing with any show of sincerity. Of all his books, probably the worst are his book on the war and his book on the United States. The latter was obviously undertaken with some notion of paying off a debt. Bennett had been to the United States; the newspapers had hailed him in their side-show way; the women's clubs had pawed over him; he had, no doubt, come home a good deal richer. What he essayed to do was to write a volume on the republic that should be at once colorably accurate and discreetly agreeable. The enterprise was quite beyond him. The book not only failed to please Americans; it offended them in a thousand subtle ways, and from its appearance dates the decline of the author's vogue among us. He is not, of course, completely forgotten, but it must be plain that Wells now stands a good deal above him in the popular estimation—even the later Wells of bad novel after bad novel. His war book missed fire in much the same

way. It was workmanlike, it was deliberately urbane, it was undoubtedly truthful—but it fell flat in England and it fell flat in America. There is no little significance in the fact that the British government, in looking about for English authors to uphold the British cause in America and labor for American participation in the war, found no usefulness in Bennett. Practically every other novelist with an American audience was drafted for service, but not Bennett. He was *non est* during the heat of the fray, and when at length he came forward with "The Pretty Lady" the pained manner with which it was received quite justified the judgment of those who had passed him over.

What all this amounts to may be very briefly put: in one of the requisite qualities of the first-rate novelist Bennett is almost completely lacking, and so it would be no juggling with paradox to argue that, at bottom, he is scarcely a novelist at all. His books, indeed,—that is, his serious books, the books of his better canon—often fail utterly to achieve the effect that one associates with the true novel. One carries away from them, not the impression of a definite transaction, not the memory of an outstanding and appealing personality, not the after-taste of a profound emotion, but merely the sense of having witnessed a gorgeous but incomprehensible parade, coming out of nowhere and going to God knows where. They are magnificent as representation, they bristle with charming detail, they radiate the humors of an acute and extraordinary man, they are entertainment of the best sort—but there is seldom anything in them of that clear, well-aimed and solid effect which one associates with the novel as work of art. Most of these books, indeed, are no more than collections of essays defectively dramatized. What is salient in them is not their people, but their backgrounds—and their people are forever fading into their backgrounds. Is there a character in any of these books that shows any sign of living, as Pendennis lives,

and Barry Lyndon, and Emma Bovary, and David Copperfield, and the George Moore who is always his own hero? Who remembers much about Sophia Baines, save that she lived in the Five Towns, or even about Clayhanger? Young George Cannon, in "The Roll-Call," is no more than an anatomical chart in a capital lecture on modern marriage. Hilda Lessways-Cannon-Clayhanger is not only inscrutable; she is also dim. The man and woman of "Whom God Hath Joined," perhaps the best of all the Bennett novels, I have so far forgotten, even after a few weeks, that I cannot remember their names. Even Denry the Audacious grows misty. One remembers that he was the center of the farce, but now he is long gone and the farce remains.

This remainder, whether he be actually novelist or no novelist, is sufficient to save Bennett, it seems to me, from the swift oblivion that so often overtakes the popular fictioneer. He may not play the game according to the rules, but the game that he plays is nevertheless extraordinarily diverting and calls for an incessant display of the finest sort of skill. No writer of his time has looked into the life of his time with sharper eyes, or set forth his findings with a greater charm and plausibility. Within his deliberately narrow limits he had done precisely the thing that Balzac undertook to do, and Zola after him: he has painted a full-length portrait of a whole society, accurately, brilliantly, and, in certain areas, almost exhaustively. The middle Englishman—not the individual, but the type—is there displayed more vividly than he is displayed anywhere else that I know of. The thing is rigidly held to its aim; there is no episodic descent or ascent to other fields. But within that one field every resource of observation, of invention and of imagination has been brought to bear upon the business—every one save that deep feeling for man in his bitter tragedy which is the most important of them all. But Bennett, whatever his failing in this capital function of the artist, is certainly of the

very highest consideration as craftsman. Scattered through his books, even his bad books, there are fragments of writing that are quite unsurpassed in our day—the shoe-shining episode in “The Pretty Lady,” the adulterous interlude in “Whom God Hath Joined,” the dinner party in “Paris Nights,” the whole discussion of the Cannon-Ingram marriage in “The Roll-Call,” the studio party in “The Lion’s Share.” Such writing is rare and exhilarating. It is to be respected. And the man who did it is not to be dismissed.

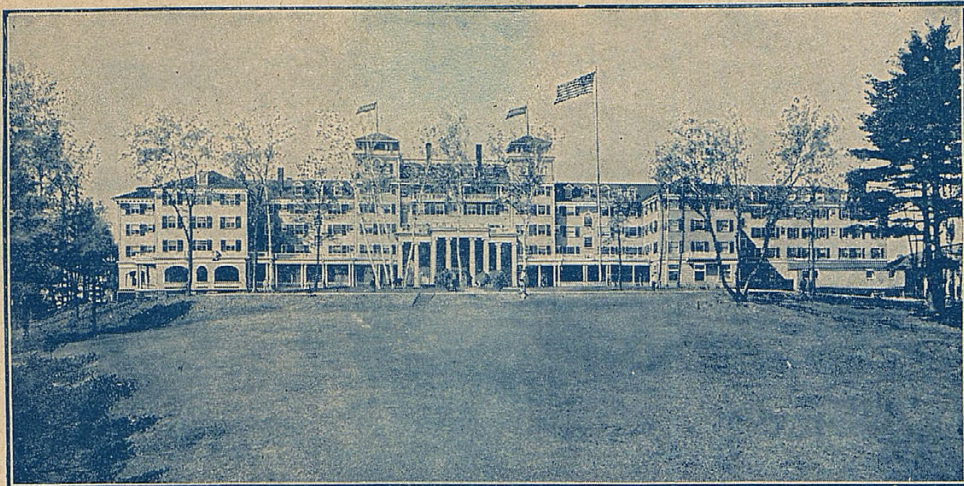
V

LAST month I exhausted the current novels; I shall have no more to say about fiction until the weather is cooler. Among more serious books I can find little of interest. “The Journal of a Young Artist,” by Marie Bashkirtseff, appears in a new and dignified reprint (*Dutton*), but the journal of Marie is now an old, old story. “The Diary of a Disappointed Man,” edited by H. G. Wells (*Doran*), I may review at length later on. It is attacked by various critics on the ground that it shows discrepancies, and is thus probably a benign forgery by Wells himself and not the genuine document it pretends to be. But these discrepancies do not seem to me to be of much importance. The diarist, let it be remembered, is supposed to have subjected his journal to a constant and highly self-conscious editing; is it impossible to imagine that this editing involved him in contradiction? At all events, it is a book occasionally amusing. So is John Galsworthy’s collection of essays and sketches, “Another Sheaf” (*Scribner*), though it is not to be mentioned in the same breath with his “A Commentary.” Galsworthy, like Wells, slides downhill. His rate of speed is not the dizzy one of Wells, but he moves steadily nevertheless. “Just Me,” by Pearl White (*Doran*), is the autobiography of a movie star—a florid tale, indeed, and done in excellent American. “A His-

tory of the United States,” by Cecil Chesterton (*Doran*), is half an effort to review the genesis and growth of the republic from an English point of view, and half an effort to bath the guileless Americano in molasses. “Set Down in Malice,” by Gerald Cumberland (*Brentano*), is a volume of reminiscences by an English musical critic. It contains much matter of no interest to Americans, but there are also sketches of men who are known on this side of the water, notably Sir Edward Elgar, George Bernard Shaw and Frank Harris. The Harris chapter is especially well done; and it renders something approaching justice to a man who has been ignorantly neglected in his own country.

VI

A GOOD many books of plays drift in, though the stream is not as high as it was several years ago. I find myself bogged in Percy MacKaye’s “Washington” (*Knopf*) before the end of the first act. MacKaye used to delight me, but since he began filling his dramas with Purpose he has only tired me. Far more readable stuff is in “Six Plays of the Yiddish Theatre,” translated and edited by Dr. Isaac Goldberg (*Luce*); “The Gentile Wife,” by Rita Wellman (*Moffat-Yard*), and “The Moon of the Caribbees,” by Eugene G. O’Neill (*Boni-Liveright*). Several of the O’Neill plays have hitherto appeared in this great literary and moral periodical, and Dr. Nathan has already advised you of the merit of the Wellman piece. The Yiddish plays offered by Dr. Goldberg are by Pinski, Levin, Hirschbein and Kobrin, and all of them are worth reading. But I can find nothing of interest in “The Broken Image” and “Patent Applied For,” by Lawrence Langner (*Arens*), nor in “The Marsh Maiden,” by Felix Gould (*Four Seas*), nor in “Bits of Background,” by Emma Beatrice Brunner (*Knopf*), nor in “Numbers,” by Grover Theis (*Brown*), nor in “The Sock,” by Don Orno.



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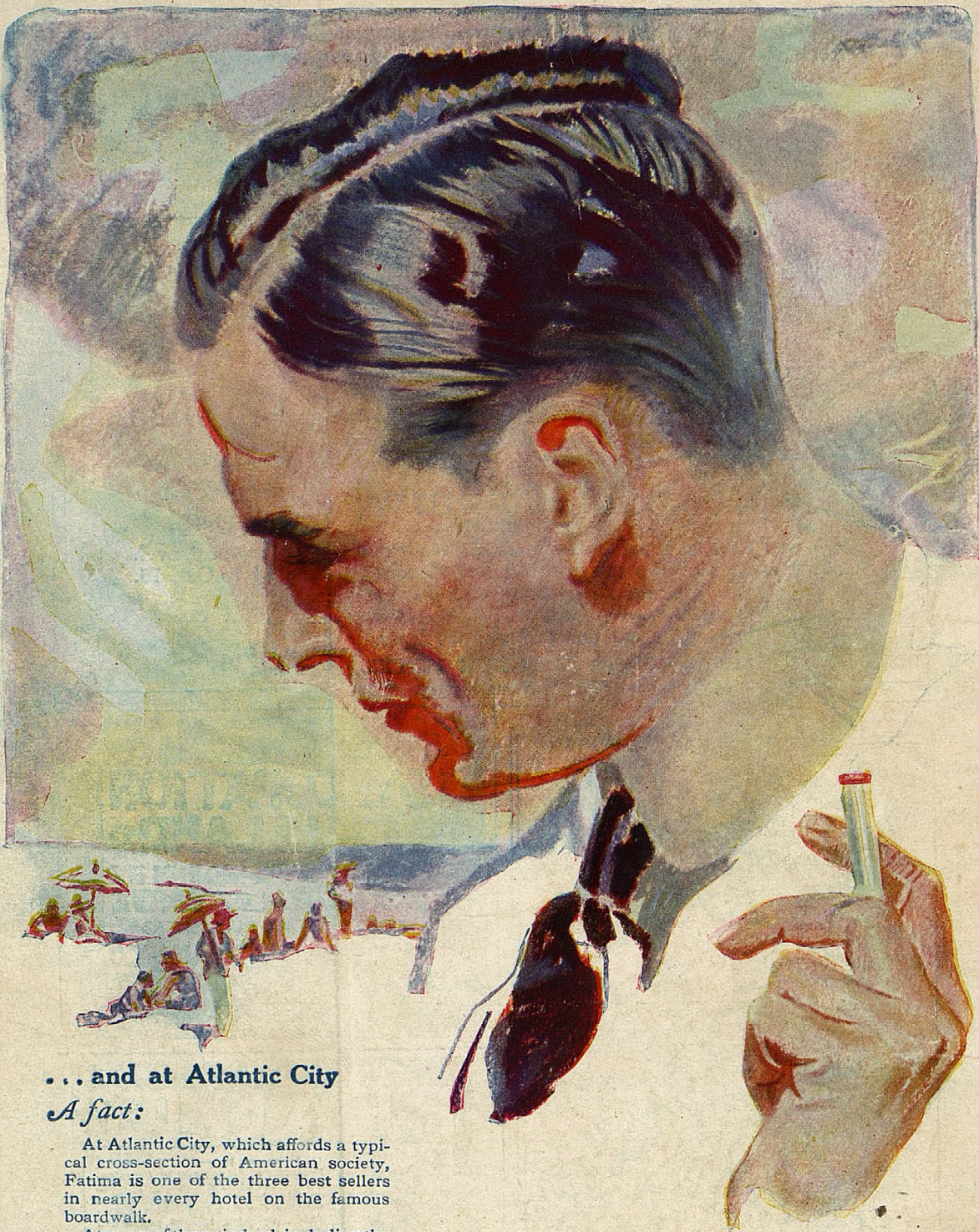


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